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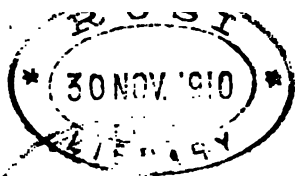
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The Briton's First Duty

The Case for Conscription

Richard BY
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WITH DIAGRAMS

'England expects that every man will do his duty'

London
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To
THE PATRIOTS
OF
GREAT AND GREATER BRITAIN
I DEDICATE THIS BOOK

PREFACE

It is with great diffidence that I offer this book to the public, but at the same time with the clear consciousness that, in doing so, I am fulfilling a patriotic duty. I have been driven to do so by a profound sense of the danger in which I believe this country has been for many years past, and *still is*, in spite of ever-increasing wealth and constant growth of territory.

It is no technical question that I propose to place before the reader. To look upon it in that light would be utterly to misunderstand the scope and purpose of this book. For I deal with a question which is not even, directly, a military or naval one at all. It is simply and solely a question of *principle*; a question of plain *duty* to the Sovereign and the State; a question that affects, not the soldier and the sailor, but *every citizen of this great Empire*; it is, in the highest sense of the word, a civilian question.

The question whether every able-bodied white man throughout the United Kingdom—throughout the Empire—ought to, and shall in future, perform the most fundamental and sacred duty of citizenship or not is one which *he*, in his millions, will have to answer, and no one else.

At the present moment the air is full of Army Reform, as it always has been when the test of war has shown our military system to be inadequate to our needs. The same delusive phrase will be used which has so often lulled us into a false security—a security from which our next awakening would be a far more terrible one than we have ever known in the past. Even as it is, no one can have failed to notice a singular want of earnestness in the public utterances of Ministers on the question of Army Reform. ‘In spite of the lessons that this Empire should have learnt as to the futility of a policy of optimism, we fail to trace any serious effort on the part of either House of Parliament to add to the preparedness of Great Britain in view of possible dangers in the future.’* There can be no real and lasting Army Reform which does not start on the only possible sound basis for an Army, namely, a *national* one.

* *Morning Post*, August 9, 1900.

On May 9, 1900, Lord Salisbury said to the Primrose League : ' Everywhere you see the powers of offence increasing. Armies become larger, Navies are founded, railways, telegraphs, all the apparatus which science has placed at the disposal of war, become more perfect and more effective. And all these things may, by one of those strange currents that sweep across the ocean of international politics, be united in one great wave and dash on your shores.' The Prime Minister went on to tell us plainly that ' the defence of the country is *not the business of the War Office or the Government, but the business of the people themselves.*' If such words are a strong tribute to the triumph of Democracy, it behoves Democracy to remember that such triumph brings with it a heavy burthen of responsibility, not to be shirked without grave danger to the Commonwealth.

It is, therefore, as a citizen of this Empire, speaking to my fellow-citizens, as one dearly loving his country to the millions who share that feeling, that I have written this book. Begun, as the result of many years' conviction, when we were at peace with all the world, having just established the Pax Britannica by the victory of Omdurman, I have written part

of it while our Army has been engaged in the war with the South African Republics, and I conclude it* while the capture of De Wet and the scattered guerilla bands of Boers has still to be effected, before even the nominal pacification of the newly-acquired territories is assured. Meanwhile, the torch of War has been lighted in the Far East, and he would be a wise prophet who should mark the limits of conflagration. No one can, however, be deaf to the many dissonances which the *Concert* of Europe—what waggish diplomat first invented that happy euphemism?—has already emitted, even while the relief of the Legations still struck the dominant note of a common policy. The primary object of this book, however, is to direct attention to dangers and responsibilities nearer home. *Are we prepared for Home Defence? are we prepared to resist invasion?*

‘In the early part of this year, “the Man in the Street” became in some measure alarmed at the turn that events were taking in South Africa. He began to ask himself questions, and among the foremost of these was, “How about home defence?” These questions he never

* This book was finished in the latter part of August, 1900.

answered for himself, nor, can it be said, were they ever satisfactorily answered for him ; but he found his answer in the triumphal march of Lord Roberts first to Bloemfontein and subsequently to Pretoria. *He has yet to learn that this is no answer, and that the question of Home Defence and a permanent addition to our Army remains a question still unanswered.**

I have attempted to answer that question in the only way in which it can be safely, adequately, honourably, and justly solved—that is, by putting in force the most sacred and inalienable right of the Sovereign and the State to call upon every able-bodied man to serve his country in home defence. I know full well that such a solution is distasteful to the vast majority of my countrymen, but I believe that that distaste is largely due to misapprehension of the principles which underlie Universal Military Service, to absolutely erroneous notions about the ordinary citizen being called upon to do garrison service in distant and unhealthy climates, and to a hundred and one absurd prejudices which have become encrusted about that much-abused word ‘conscription.’

I ask for this book only that which English-

* *Morning Post*, August 9, 1900.

men are accustomed to grant even to an enemy, a fair hearing. And, in doing so, I would ask leave to make a personal statement as to my political views, which might be regarded as impertinent in any other circumstances.

I know no Party where the welfare of my country, where *National* and *Imperial* questions are concerned. Indeed, I confess that I have never had much sympathy for party politics of any kind. But if I were asked whether my political principles tended towards Conservatism or Liberalism, I should say that I regard myself as a philosophic Liberal, aiming at the greatest measure of freedom for the individual that is compatible with the welfare and safety of the State, and at the advancement of the well-being—physical, moral, intellectual, and social—of the people. I wish also to see Britain strong and respected abroad; not feared by small States, but respected and honoured by all Powers, great and small. I have no desire that we should acquire ever more territory, regardless of whether it is really needed, or of the rights of others. But I would uphold *our* rights and act up to our treaty obligations at *any* cost of men and money. In a word, if I had to adopt the shibboleth of party, I should

call myself a Liberal Imperialist. I detest Jingoism, and regard war as a most deplorable calamity, destitute to-day even of those æsthetic qualities which used to blind men to its real horrors. So far I am as ardent a devotee of Peace as any member of the Peace Society. But I am convinced that the only way to attain to assured peace is, as the great George Washington held, to be fully prepared for war—so prepared that no other nation shall dream of attacking us, while the best preventive against Jingoism is the *personal* service of every able-bodied man to the country.

So much I may perhaps be pardoned for saying, in order to indicate that there is no Jingo spirit of aggression behind my proposals, but only the safety, the honour and the welfare of the nation, the Empire, and the race.

I have said very little of ‘the lessons of the war’ in this book, though it would not have been difficult to do so. But one thing I say with all the earnestness of a profound conviction : I believe that God has seen fit to favour us above all other nations by giving us an object-lesson in our defencelessness—not upon these shores, not amid the green fields and lanes of this dear England, but in a remote part of the

Empire, whence the thunder of war reaches us only in faint reverberations. Will the nation listen while there is yet time, or is that 'luck,' which *should* be a Providential warning to gird our loins and put our house in order, destined to bring upon us the ruin and misery which surely await those who, having ears to hear and eyes to see, *refuse* to do either?

When we have a supremely strong and efficient Navy, a highly-trained, long-service Imperial Army and a *Britannic Militia*, consisting of the whole able-bodied manhood of the Empire standing shoulder to shoulder for Queen, for Country, and for Right, then, *and not till then*, we may say with truth :

'Come the three corners of the world in arms,
And we shall shock them : naught shall make us rue,
If England to itself do rest but true.'

GEORGE F. SHEE.

DAVOS PLATZ,
New Year's Day, 1901.

NOTE.—I wish to express my great obligation for much valuable help and advice to a Naval Officer who has not only studied the Naval forces of this and other countries, but has also critically examined the military forces of Europe.

Preface

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He has devoted particular attention to that most important of all questions—the probability of the invasion of these islands. His opinion coincides with that of the old Iron Duke, that steam has bridged the Channel and facilitated invasion far more than it has increased our power to prevent it.

G. F. S.

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Part I

The Present Position of England

CHAPTER I

GENERAL SURVEY

WHEN the history of England during the nineteenth century comes to be written by a historian far enough away from the period to enable him to view it in due perspective, I believe that the fact which will strike him most forcibly in dealing with the latter part of it will be this : that a fabric of Empire so vast should have reposed upon a foundation so precarious.

Such a historian will have ample scope for brilliant pages descriptive of the country's progress in material well-being, a progress in which each new advance in the domains of science, each new triumph of inventive genius—and no former age has witnessed advances more important or triumphs more numerous—has been made to

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minister to the comfort and convenience of our teeming millions. Nor will his attention be confined to the signs of material progress alone. He will, of course, dwell on the increased facilities of communication which the railway, steam-navigation, the telegraph, the telephone and the Marconi system have brought about ; on the wonderful advance which the science of surgery has made, owing to the discovery of anæsthetics and the application of the Röntgen rays ; and on the improvement in sanitation, which has caused such a marked decrease in the death-rate. But he will also note with satisfaction that education has made enormous strides, while crime has greatly diminished ; and that in no age has Charity in all its forms, whether aiming at the material or the moral welfare of the people at large, done such beneficent work, or counted so many noble and devoted servants.

It is, however, particularly the material aspect of England's development during the century that I have in view here.

And looking to this alone, it may safely be affirmed that no century in the course of our history has witnessed so extraordinary a development of national progress and prosperity as that which has just drawn to a close.

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The population of the United Kingdom has increased from 15,000,000 to 40,000,000, that of the Empire from 25,000,000 to 400,000,000. The area of the British Empire, which was about 1,500,000 square miles in 1800, is now 11,400,000. Exports and imports amount to £745,000,000, as against £67,000,000 at the beginning of the century, while the tonnage of our mercantile marine is ten times what it was then.*

Yet the future historian will not lack a fit subject for antithesis, in turning from the picture of so vast an Empire and such fabulous wealth to the means by which those treasures are defended. For he will find, to his amazement, that, while the British people have shown a very full sense of the splendour of their Empire, and have even been extremely anxious to extend its bounds wherever an opportunity has seemed to offer, yet they and—stranger still—their statesmen have been content with about the same forces for its defence with which their

* These figures are approximate. They are taken from Mulhall's 'Dictionary of Statistics' (1899), except those giving the area and population of the Empire in 1800. The latter are difficult to obtain; but I have compiled them with great care from various sources, and believe the above estimate to be fairly accurate.

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forefathers guarded an inheritance far less valuable. In other words, he will find that this people, who have prided themselves on their business habits and practical common-sense, have utterly failed to apply to their Empire those principles of prudent insurance which each individual would adopt in dealing with his business or private property. It is not my purpose to investigate the causes that have brought about this anomalous state of things. Such an inquiry would lead to a detailed consideration of the process by which our Empire has been built, or rather, I should say, has *grown up*. It may be sufficient here to point out that the latter expression most correctly describes the process of expansion* which has taken place, and at the same time indicates the reason why the vital questions which affect the defence of the Empire have been so strangely neglected till of late. For, to use Professor Seely's descriptive phrase, 'We seem, as it were, to have conquered and peopled half the world in a fit of absence of mind.'

'With us, empire-building has taken the form of pure evolution, little heeded in the process, and almost wholly without guidance. It has

* See 'The Expansion of England,' Professor Seely.

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naturally followed that defensive strength has not advanced *pari passu* with the continuous extension of our frontiers, and that the enhanced responsibilities to which each annexation or added protectorate immediately gave rise have never been practically recognised.*

It is, indeed, only comparatively recently that the idea of Imperial defence—that is, a real organization of the whole forces of the Empire for war—has been seriously considered. Professor Seely, writing in 1883, expressed the hope ‘that some organization *might gradually be arrived at* which might make the whole force of the Empire available in time of war.’†

Sir Charles Dilke, in his ‘Problems of Greater Britain’ (vol. ii., p. 512, 1890), said: ‘There are few more astounding proofs of the curious carelessness with which Imperial defence was treated some years ago than the fact that the coaling-stations . . . were left by us in a condition in which they were unable to protect themselves even for the shortest space of time.’

And in 1897 the same author, writing in collaboration with Mr. Spenser Wilkinson, wrote:

* ‘The Defence of the Empire and the Militia Ballot’ (Sir G. S. Clarke, *Nineteenth Century*, January, 1900).

† ‘Expansion of England,’ p. 298.

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‘There is a preliminary question of the gravest import which a foreign statesman, before embarking on such a contest [a war with England], must answer for himself, and which Great Britain, therefore, cannot reasonably leave unsettled. What is the power with which, in case of conflict, our enemy would have to contend? Is it Great Britain, or is it the British Empire?’

‘No doubt a war with Great Britain is, technically speaking, also a war with the British Empire; but the question is whether in such a struggle the British Government would be able to draw only on the resources of the United Kingdom or of the United Kingdom and India, or whether they would be able to throw into the scale all the energy and all the resources of every part of the Queen's dominions. . . . The resources of the British Empire are so vast, that if it were believed that they would be fully and freely employed, and *were reasonably organized for defence*, no statesman of any nation would, in his sober senses, dream of provoking a conflict single-handed. This belief, unfortunately, can hardly be said to exist. Opposite views on this subject prevail side by side. Some people seem to think that it is the business of Great Britain out

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of her own resources to defend the Empire against all comers. The other and more logical doctrine is, that every subject of the Queen is in the last resort bound to assist in the defence of any and every part of the Queen's dominions. . . .

'The great question, perhaps the greatest question, which has to be answered by the present generation of Englishmen is whether the British Empire is to become a series of independent, though perhaps friendly, States, or to make a reality of the military unity, which at the present time is rather a sentiment than a practical institution. It is evidently impossible to organize the defences of the Empire until this prior question has been settled.'*

And, referring to the result, if we were defeated in a contest with France and Russia, and lost India and our sea-power, the authors proceed: 'This loss of sea-power would leave each of our colonies in a position of isolation without the guarantee of an assured British future. The lot of French Canada—the loss of its original allegiance—might be reserved for any of them, except, perhaps, Australia. It is this consideration which supplies the all-sufficient motive which should induce the Colonies to join

* 'Imperial Defence,' p. 42.

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heartily in the work of defence, and to submit to the unity of direction, without which war cannot be efficiently conducted.'

Quotations such as these serve to show how tentatively and academically the question of organized Imperial defence has been hitherto approached ; they also give us the reasons why it could not be dealt with in any other manner.

Fortunately, the question whether a war with Great Britain means also a war with the British Empire has now been answered with a clear affirmative in a way eminently satisfactory to Englishmen, though probably not so pleasing to the foreign statesmen alluded to above.

The present war with the Transvaal has afforded the clearest proof that the Colonies do in truth realize the solidarity of interests that binds us together as one People. As has so often been the case in history, the impulse to a closer union has been supplied by outward pressure ; and it may be truly said that the Ultimatum of the South African Republics was a bugle-call whose notes, echoing round the world, summoned to arms under the same flag Britons from every quarter of the globe. Nor were its notes unheeded ; Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Cape Colony and Natal, freely sent their sons to fight

by the side of our regular army ; and the union thus typified has been cemented by the blood shed together on many a South African battle-field. It is permissible to hope that this great event, whose full import was perhaps but dimly realized by those who acted the chief part in it, may bring about the speedy fulfilment of the hope expressed above by Professor Seely, viz., that the whole forces of the Empire might some day be fully and intelligently organized for war. But do not let us deceive ourselves into the fond belief that such an organization actually exists.

It would indeed be surprising if those who direct the course of the British Empire should have organized a scheme of *Imperial* defence, seeing how often the lesser question of *National* defence has been absolutely neglected by those who should be responsible for it. The history of that neglect is a lamentable one, and is well calculated to fill anyone approaching it for the first time with mingled amazement and indignation. 'What are these Boards for?' asked Sir Robert Peel in 1845, when he found he had been utterly misled by the return of our naval forces supplied to him by the Board of the Admiralty. This is the question that everyone

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must ask himself who studies the history of our naval and military administration.*

In the evidence given before the Royal Commission in 1888, Admiral Lord Hood said: 'No complete scheme showing what were the requirements of the country so far as the navy is concerned was laid before the Board last year before the estimates were considered; I have never known of such a scheme ever being laid before a Board of Admiralty'!

Needless to say that, where such methods have prevailed in dealing with the task to be allotted to the navy, no properly thought-out scheme for the *military* defence of the country has even been attempted until lately; and at the present moment it cannot be said that any of our ports, tempting as their wealth and shipping would prove in time of war, to a naval raid on the part of the enemy, are adequately defended with forts, except Portsmouth and, perhaps, Plymouth.

Yet for years past thoughtful Englishmen have watched with ever-increasing anxiety the growing disproportion between the territorial expansion of Great Britain and her almost

* See 'Naval Administrations, 1827 to 1892,' Sir John H. Briggs.

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stationary military resources. The cry of our merchants has ever been, and still is, 'expansion.' 'Give us new markets,' they say; 'give us new markets into which we can pour the products of our industry, or you will rue it. For we cannot compete on equal terms with the German merchant and his cheap labour, hampered as we are by strikes and trades-unions.' Thus the British merchant; thus, too, the British public as a whole. This is not the place to examine whether this is a wise policy or a necessary one, though it may be a question whether the time has not come for England to adopt the policy recommended to his successors by Augustus; whether it is not time for us to consolidate and turn to full account our vast possessions—many of them hardly or sparsely populated and absolutely undeveloped—rather than to seek to add to them. It is a question, too, whether the cry of the merchant is altogether a just one,* whether he has really done his work properly in the 'old' markets before he demands new ones, and whether his want of success in the former is not largely due to a certain lack of energy, to a want of a sound commercial education and of

* 'The Cry for New Markets' (Mr. F. Greenwood, *Nineteenth Century*, April, 1899).

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that ability to supply exactly the right article which enables the German merchant and commercial traveller to oust his British rival in so many of the 'old' markets of the world. These are questions that would lead me too far, and their answer does not affect the point at issue.

One thing is clear ; as Sir Wolfe Barry put it in a letter to the *Times*, November 8, 1899, from a military point of view, we are trading with insufficient capital. ' Within the last fifty years we have added immensely to our territories without a sufficiently corresponding increase in the number of our troops.' And a writer in the *Spectator* of November 11, 1899, said : ' We are adding province after province to our dominion, sometimes as if we were driven on by another will* than our own, till we lie athwart the path of the whole active world except America, and may be called on to send armies to all the points of the compass at one and the same time. It is almost an accident that we have not to wage a second war against the Khalifa simultaneously with that against the

* That mysterious 'will' is simply the economic law which urges us to find territories not under the dominion of protective tariffs, so that the Free Trade principles which we advocate may have fair play.

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Boers, and if a caprice seized Menelik, or the Ameer died . . . we might find ourselves compelled not only to call out the reserves, but to mobilize the whole militia.* In order to realize fully how utterly inadequate our military resources are for the proper protection of our Empire, it is necessary to compare the situation of England at the present day† (disregarding the exceptional additions to our forces caused by the war with the Transvaal) with that which existed at the beginning of the century.

Such a comparison is all the more necessary, because the vast majority of Englishmen labour under the delusion that Great Britain is stronger at the present moment, both absolutely and relatively, than she ever was before. This unhappy delusion—unhappy because it leads to that false sense of security and baseless self-satisfaction which has ever been the most fruitful cause of ruin to empires—is partly due

* It is instructive to note that the Government has called out all the reserves and intends to mobilize the whole militia; such has been the drain on our military resources caused by a war against 50,000 to 60,000 undisciplined farmers. It is not pleasant to think what would happen if Menelik were to move against the recently-conquered Soudan, or if the Ameer's death were to bring about serious complications with Russia (March 12, 1900).

† This was written at the end of October, 1899.

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to the presence of certain obvious facts alluded to above, which are well calculated to lead astray those who only look at the surface of things. For there is no doubt that Great Britain was never wealthier or more prosperous than at the present time. Her possessions are larger, her population more numerous, her commerce vaster, her revenue greater, even her navy bigger,* than ever they were at any period of her past history.†

In view of such obvious signs of progress, it is perhaps natural that 'the man in the street' should take it for granted that our national

* *Absolutely*, not *relatively*, as I shall show later on.

† It is not my purpose here to examine to what extent this rosy picture is darkened by certain phenomena which are quite as well ascertained as the above, but which, being somewhat unpalatable, do not generally find a place in the pleasant after-dinner oratory of our leading politicians. Among such phenomena might be mentioned the great increase of gambling, the growth of insanity, and—most serious fact of all—the alarming fall in the birth-rate. The birth-rate in 1899 was 20 per cent. less than in 1875. It was also '20 per cent. less per marriage in 1897 than it was in 1886' ('The Rush to Ruin, and the Remedy,' George Quick, R.N.).

Mulhall's comparative table for 1896 shows that the United Kingdom had the lowest birth-rate per 1,000 inhabitants (29.2; in 1897 it was 29) of any country in Europe except France, Sweden, and Belgium. (An article by Mr. Edwin Cannan, the well-known economist and statistician, dealing fully with the subject appeared in the *Economic Review*, July, 1900.)

defences have kept pace with the development that has taken place in every other part of the commonwealth. But while some allowance must be made for these circumstances, it cannot be denied that the British citizen, even among the highly-educated classes, displays an ignorance of everything pertaining to the army and the navy which must strike a foreigner as simply amazing. It is, however, hardly surprising that the ordinary civilian should be so ignorant when the professional historian has habitually treated such questions as if they were hardly worthy of serious notice.*

Contrary, then, to the generally prevailing opinion, I maintain that England is in a very different position nowadays to that which she occupied at the beginning of the century, and when I speak of a different position, I mean—unpalatable as it may sound—emphatically a worse position. I mean that England is *relatively* far weaker than she was then, both in proportion to her vastly increased boundaries and the wealth of her commerce, on the one

* 'I confess that I have been amazed when reading our innumerable political histories to see how unconcernedly army, navy, and the whole question of national defence are left out of account' ('A History of the British Army,' Preface, Hon. J. W. Fortescue).

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hand, and to the prodigious growth of the armed strength of her rivals and possible foes, on the other. I know that this is a proposition that will be heard with surprise and denied with indignation by many of my readers ; and I shall, no doubt, have the epithet 'unpatriotic' hurled at my head for making it—the final argument of many who seem to believe that it is more patriotic to bury one's head in the sand, like the ostrich, than to see and try to remedy the weaknesses of one's country. Those who prefer argument to this manner of dealing with the question will point to a splendid navy and to a largely increased army in triumphant refutation of my statement. Yet I think I shall have no difficulty in proving my point up to the hilt in the following pages. I propose, then, to show that our national defences are far weaker now than they were a hundred years ago, relatively—

(1) To the expansion of our Empire and the corresponding enormous growth of our commerce, on the one hand ; and

(2) The concomitant prodigious increase in the armed forces (*naval* as well as military) of the chief foreign Powers, on the other.

(3) To the change which has taken place in the attitude of those Powers towards us since that time.

CHAPTER II

THE ARMY

‘We have learnt . . . that as a military Power we are absolutely unequal to the duties and responsibilities of our imperial position.’—SIDNEY LOW (*Nineteenth Century*, January, 1900).

SURVEYING our position at the beginning of the century, we find that, in virtue of the native energy of our race, a splendid geographical position, and a coast dotted with good harbours, together with the practical absence of serious competition, we had attained the most complete commercial supremacy. Other nations were occupied either with conquest (France), or with a struggle for existence (Prussia), or, later, for national unity (Germany, and still later Italy); or still asleep in semi-barbarism (Russia); or more or less decayed (Spain, Portugal, Venice, and Genoa). The very cause which absolutely prevented most of the Continental nations from entering into commercial competition with us—

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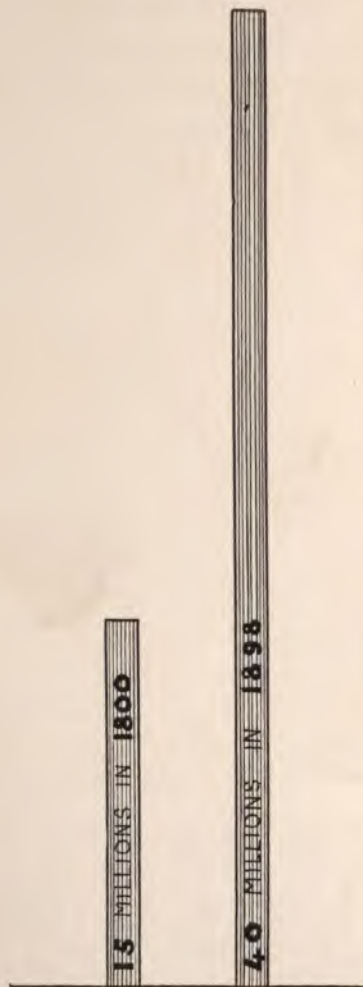
viz., war—had resulted in giving us the commerce and the carrying trade of the world. 'Great Britain alone had seen her trade increase by war, the total imports and exports having risen between the years 1792 and 1815 from forty-four millions sterling to ninety-six millions—an addition of more than 118 per cent.'*

'During the wars of the French Revolution and Empire, the immense increase of the industrial prosperity of England triumphantly refuted the predictions of her enemies as well as the complaints of alarmists. As the effect of every fresh declaration of war on the Continent had been to diminish competition in the great market of the world, and to throw into their hands the navies and colonies of their adversaries, the English had begun to look upon the loan of millions and the subsidies as so much premium paid for the development of their own resources.'†

Yet, great as our Empire and commerce must have seemed to those who had seen colony after colony of our enemies fall like ripe fruit into

* 'The Defence of the Empire and the Militia Ballot' (Colonel Sir G. S. Clarke, *Nineteenth Century*, January, 1900).

† Lanfrey's 'Life of Napoleon,' quoted in the above article.



THE POPULATION OF THE UNITED KINGDOM IN 1800 AND IN 1898.

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our hands, while our fleets swept the ocean with none to dispute their supremacy, the following figures will show how small our Empire was in comparison with that over which the British flag now waves. They show the growth of our possessions, trade, and commerce from 1800 to 1898 :

		Population of United Kingdom.	Population of Empire.	Area of Empire.
1800	...	15,000,000	25,000,000*	1,500,000 sq. m.
1898	...	40,000,000	402,000,000	11,400,000 „

			Revenue.	Nominal Tonnage of British Shipping (in- cluding Colonial Vessels).
1800	...	...	£37,500,000†	1,856,000†
1898	...	...	£116,000,000	10,325,000§

Exports and Imports.

1800	...	...	...	...	...	£67,000,000
1898	...	...	...	...	...	£764,500,000||

Let us see what were the forces employed to

* These figures are approximate (see. p. 3). Since the above was written, we have added 160,000 square miles to our territory and over 1,000,000 subjects by the annexation of the South African Republics.

† For Great Britain only (Mulhall). The revenue for the United Kingdom is not given till 1810, when it was £52,600,000.

‡ Mulhall.

§ *Ibid.*

|| 'Statesman's Year-Book,' 1900.

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guard our possessions a hundred years ago, and compare them with those which have recently been thought sufficient to defend territories and wealth infinitely greater.

On March 8, 1805, Lord Hawkesbury made a remarkable speech,* in which he gave a detailed account of our military forces, and at the same time instituted a careful comparison between them and the armies employed by the chief foreign Powers. I have therefore taken 1805 as the date for the earlier period, though, of course, it must be remembered that we had then been at war with France since May, 1803. As, however, the numbers of our army increased steadily from 1803 till 1813, in which year they reached the maximum, I shall not be accused of choosing 1805 as a year of exceptionally large numbers.

The Army Estimates for 1805, as reproduced in the Journals of the House of Commons for that year, provided for the following establishments (including all ranks):

Regular forces, home and colonial	...	208,718
India forces	... ..	20,145
Total	... ..	228,863

* Cobett's 'Parliamentary Debates,' vol. iii., p. 808.

These figures include the foreign corps (17,386) serving mainly on the Continent. The number that actually served was 22,375, and as the needs of our army grew, the number of foreign mercenaries in our pay increased year by year till September, 1813, when it reached 53,729.* The figures given do not include the Artillery or Engineers. But from other sources it appears that they amounted to 18,525, 15,258 of which belonged to the home forces. Leaving these out of account, however, we find that the Estimates provided for 208,718 regular troops,† exclusive of those serving in India. A Return of officers and men serving in each year from 1800 to 1858 was issued in 1859 (Paper 88, Session 2). From this Return it appears that

* For the history of the employment of foreign mercenaries to supply the want of English troops, *vide* Clode's 'Military Forces of the Crown,' vol. ii., pp. 431-436. Foreign contingents were last employed by us in the Crimean War. It is hardly necessary to point out that, in the present state of Europe, when every country except England claims the armed service of the whole manhood of the nation, such a method of adding to the numbers of our army must soon become impossible. It has not been attempted during the South African War.

† The regular troops consisted of the 'guards and garrisons' and the 'plantation forces' (*vide* Mr. Windham's speech, January 21, 1807: Cobett's 'Parliamentary Debates').

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the numbers serving in 1805 (*i.e.*, the effectives of the army) were :

Regular forces, home and colonial	...	184,728
India forces	... ..	15,592
Total	... ..	200,320

Deducting the India forces, the effective of the regular army was therefore 184,728, being 24,990 short of the establishment.* The Estimates provided for a militia establishment of 103,328, of whom 101,451 were effective according to the above Return. The same Return gives the number of the volunteers as 429,165.†

Leaving the India forces out of account, we have therefore the following figures for the total forces, regular and auxiliary :

	Establishment.	Effectives.	Amount voted.
Regular army	... 208,718†	184,728§	} £22,272,051
Militia	... 103,328	101,451	
Volunteers	... —	429,165	
		715,344	

In the speech referred to above, Lord

* According to another Return, the numbers were 49,000 short of the establishment.

† This figure apparently included the Sea-Fencibles, corresponding to Naval Volunteers.

‡ Exclusive of Artillery and Engineers.

§ Including Artillery and Engineers.

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Hawkesbury gave the following very interesting figures, in which the armies of the chief Powers are compared :

	Total Military Force excluding Volunteers.	Population.	Population capable of bearing Arms.	Proportion of Soldiers to Men capable of bearing Arms.
England...	390,000*	15,000,000	3,800,000	1 in 10
France ...	362,000	32,000,000	8,000,000	1 in 14
Russia ...	590,000	34,000,000	8,500,000	1 in 14
Austria ...	370,000	20,000,000	5,000,000	1 in 13 or 14
Prussia ...	250,000	9,000,000	2,500,000	1 in 10

He added that there were 380,000 volunteers and 30,000 Sea-Fencibles ; so that 'the whole number of men in arms in the United Kingdom was 800,000,' which was 'equal to 1 in 4 of the whole population of this country capable of bearing arms.'

The following were the establishments for and the effectives in the year 1898-99 :†

* Including the India forces. Lord Hawkesbury's figures are larger than those I have found in the various returns of the time. But it is extremely difficult to obtain reliable figures about the early years of the century, or, indeed, about any year, as those who have studied War Office figures know. In any case, Lord Hawkesbury's figures passed unchallenged, so they may be taken to give a fairly accurate account of our forces at the time.

† I have taken the Estimates for 1898, as the figures for most

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Money vote (total)	£20,413,817
				Establishment.	Effectives.*
Regular Forces (Home and Colonial)				171,394	157,863
Army Reserve	...	...	...	83,050	78,839
Militia (including Permanent Staff and Militia Reserve)	...	...	...	132,493	110,960
Militia (Channel Islands, Malta, and Bermuda)	...	...	...	6,468	5,622
Yeomanry (including Staff)	...	...	...	11,891	10,207†
Volunteers	„	...	...	263,963	230,678‡
Total (Home and Colonial)	...	...	...	669,259	594,169
Wanting to complete Establishment	...	...	...	75,090	—
Regular Forces on Indian Establishment	...	...	...	73,162	74,467

A comparison of the Estimates and the effectives in 1805 and 1898 gives us the following figures :

of the other subjects of comparison and for other countries are not available for a later date.

* Nearly all the figures for the effective strength are taken from the Return for January 1, 1899. The return for 1898, of course, gives much lower figures.

† Total number *enrolled* at the time of the training (summer, 1898); the actual number that went through the eight days' training was far less—about 8,000.

‡ The *enrolled* strength on November 1, 1898. Of these 224,300 were returned as *efficient*s (Annual Return of the Volunteer Corps for 1898).

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		Establishment.	Effectives.
Regular forces (Home and Colonial)	{1805	... 208,718	184,728
	{1898	... 171,394	157,863
Militia	{1805	... 103,328	101,451
	{1898	... 132,493	110,960
Volunteers	{1805*	... —	429,165
	{1898	... 263,963	230,678
Yeomanry	{1805†	... —	—
	{1898	... 11,891	10,207
Reserves	{1805	... —	—
	{1898	... 83,050	78,839
Total effective Forces (excluding India)	{1805	... 715,344	
	{1898	... 594,169	

In comparing these numbers, it must be remembered that the Miscellaneous Establishments have been greatly increased in proportion to the combatant forces, and in some cases newly created since the early years of the century. Taking the Establishment of all the Forces except Volunteers and Yeomanry, including India, we find that there was one soldier to twenty-four of the male population capable of bearing arms

* I have not been able to discover what number of Volunteers was provided in the Estimates of 1804-5. The Estimates for 1803-4 give a volunteer force of 379,943 for Great Britain, and 70,000 for Ireland—total, 449,943 (see Clode's 'Military Forces of the Crown,' vol. i., p. 312). The numbers given by Clode elsewhere (p. 323) do not correspond with those given in the Return from which the above figures are taken (Return issued in 1854: Paper 88, Session 2).

† Though the Yeomanry has existed as a permanent force since 1802, I have not been able to discover what number was voted in 1805, or whether the force was included in the total given for the Volunteers. I believe the latter is the case.

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in 1898 ; while if we include the establishment of the Yeomanry and Volunteers, there was one 'man in arms' in thirteen of the same population.* Thus, while the area of the British Empire has increased more than tenfold and its population eightfold, the total of the regular army was only about 30,000 more in 1898 than in 1805—excluding the army in India it was 30,000 *less* than in 1805—while there were 125,000 *less* men 'in arms' in the United Kingdom !

True, if we add the native army of India and the various Colonial Militias,† the nominal forces for the defence of the Empire amounted to about 1,000,000 men ; the population being over 400,000,000, this gives us 1 in 100 'armed men' out of about 100,000,000 whom we may take to be capable of bearing arms. But, in comparing our forces with those of other nations, we must remember that their troops consist of white men only,‡ completely organized for war by one central authority having absolute control

* There were about 10,000,000 men nominally capable of bearing arms in the United Kingdom in 1898.

† For a careful analysis of the Colonial Forces, see an article in the *Times* of October 3, 1899.

‡ Except about 10,000 native African soldiers in the service of France.

over all the military resources of the nation ; whereas the British Government has to obtain recruits, even for our small Regular Army, by competing with other employers in the open labour market, and depends for the Auxiliary Forces upon the goodwill of the ordinary citizen. The organization of *Imperial* Defence is, as we have seen, still a thing of the future, and must in turn also depend upon the enlightened goodwill of the Colonies, which will, no doubt, induce them to submit to that unifying control from one centre, viz., the Mother Country, without which no efficient organization of the forces of the Empire for war can be achieved.

But if the forces just described seem small in comparison with those which England had at her call when the population of the United Kingdom was only 15,000,000, they must be deemed insignificant indeed when we consider how the Armies of the other Powers have increased since the beginning of the century.

The following table shows the armed strength of the principal countries of Europe :

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COMPARISON OF THE ARMED STRENGTH OF THE PRINCIPAL COUNTRIES OF EUROPE.

	Area : English Square Miles.	Population.	Army on War Footing.	Percentage of Soldiers to Adult Males.
Great Britain	120,979	38,104,975	500,000	9
Austria- Hungary...	240,942	41,358,000	2,100,000	45
Belgium ...	11,373	6,069,321	200,000	30
France ...	204,092	38,517,000	3,500,000	88
Denmark ...	15,289	2,185,335	110,000	44
Germany ...	208,830	52,279,000	3,750,000	68
Italy ...	110,646	31,667,000	1,300,000	40
Netherlands	12,648	5,004,204	69,000	14
Russia ...	8,644,100	129,000,000	4,000,000	33
Sweden and Norway ...	297,377	7,230,918	288,000	38
Spain ...	196,173	17,550,216	500,000	26
Switzerland	15,976	2,917,754	230,000	74
Turkey ...	1,576,700	38,791,000	750,000	31

(Figures taken from 'Die Vedette,' as quoted in the
R.U.S.I. Journal, February, 1900.)

With regard to this table, it may be observed that the figures are well within the mark, as will be seen by taking those given by Mr. Charles S. Jerram* for 1899 :

	Army on War Footing.
Great Britain	713,000†
Austria-Hungary	3,000,000
Belgium	155,000

* 'The Armies of the World.'

† Exclusive of the Native Army and Imperial Service Troops in India (total 170,000), but including European Volunteers in India (30,000).

				Army on War Footing.
France	...	...	...	4,660,000
Denmark	...	...	...	53,000
Germany	...	...	...	6,213,000
Italy	...	...	...	3,325,000
Netherlands	...	...	...	130,000
Russia	...	...	...	4,000,000
Sweden and Norway	...	...	...	399,000
Spain	...	...	...	750,000
Switzerland	...	...	...	249,000
Turkey	...	...	...	800,000

In comparing these figures, it is important to remember that those given for other countries include, in most cases, only men who are actually serving or *have served* their time and subsequent training in the *army* or its reserves, while the numbers given for Great Britain include *Volunteers* and *Yeomanry*, thousands of whom have never taken part in field training, manœuvres, etc., nor served any length of time *together* as tactical units carrying out military operations as a field force of all arms. For instance, the German Landsturm (the *last defensive* force upon which the country relies) consists of about 3,200,000 men below forty-five years of age. The vast majority of these men have done their two years' service in the army, five in the reserve (*i.e.*, two trainings of eight weeks each), and five years in the Landwehr (*i.e.*, two trainings of from eight to fourteen days). The first levy of the Landsturm

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comprises men up to their thirty-ninth year. It is obviously impossible to compare a body of Volunteers with the same number of Landsturm men who have had such training as this. If we were to reckon only the Army (including the British Forces in India), its Reserves, the Militia Reserve, and the Militia, our total war strength (January 1, 1899) was :

Army at home and abroad, including India	...	232,340
Reserve	... ..	78,839
Militia* (including Militia Reserve)	... ..	110,960

Total of troops that have had or are undergoing regular training	422,139
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I think that anyone who has followed me in the comparison I have established between our present military forces and those we had in the

* With regard to the militia, it may be observed :

1. That at least 10,000 annually enlist from that force into the Line, and are therefore *counted twice over*. In 1898 the Enlistments to the Line were 15,167.

2. That the Militia Reserve (31,005 in 1898) is not a Reserve for the Militia at all, but really a part of the Army Reserve.

3. That a considerable number of Army Reserve men enter the Militia annually, 'in order to practise the only trade they have ever learnt, and to keep out of the workhouse.' These are credited *both to the Militia and to the Reserve*.

4. That there are annually many thousands of deserters (8,716 in 1898).

5. That the Militia is always many thousands short of its Establishment (19,054 in 1898).

early years of the century will admit that they are absolutely insufficient, having regard—

(1) To the enormous expansion of the Empire.

(2) To the colossal armed forces of the Continental Powers.

The Establishment in 1898 was ...	132,493
The number enrolled in 1898 was ...	113,439
The number present at the month's training in 1898 was ...	98,042

That is, only 98,042 actually went through the short training of a month. And from these we have to deduct :

Militia Reserve ...	31,005
Enlistments to Line and Navy ...	15,963
Double Enlistments and men from Reserve (say) ...	2,000
Deserters ...	8,716
Total deductions ...	57,684

When these facts are taken into consideration, the 113,000 (or 132,000 !) Militia of whom the public hear with a comforting sense of security melt down to something like 40,000 effective men. In fact, while, as we all know, the material and the spirit of the Militia are excellent, and it is a good feeder to the Regular Army, as a force in itself it is what Mr. H. O. Arnold-Forster—perhaps the ablest civilian critic of our Army—called it in 1892, ‘a patent and recognised fraud.’ For a full discussion and analysis of the whole subject, see his book, ‘Our Home Army.’

CHAPTER III

THE NAVY

‘At this time [1801] the British Navy was superior to the combined forces of all Europe.’—MAHAN: ‘The Influence of Sea-Power upon the French Revolution and Empire.’

DOUBTLESS some of my readers have followed my analysis of the military resources of the Empire a little impatiently, convinced that all this is of comparatively small importance, seeing what a splendid Navy we have.

‘We admit all this,’ I hear them say; ‘but we really do not need a large army. We are a naval Power *par excellence*, and as long as our Navy is the splendid and efficient force it is, we may snap our fingers at foreign Powers and their huge armies.’ Or thus: ‘If the Navy is strong enough, we cannot be attacked; if it is not strong enough, no army can save us.’*

* ‘The Military Weakness of England and the Militia Ballot’ (Sidney Low, *Nineteenth Century*, January, 1900). I should say that Mr. Sidney Low quotes this argument in order to show its weakness.

I yield to no one in the strength of my belief that it is of first and paramount importance that our Navy should be the largest, best, and strongest in the world; and I shall show further on that I am by no means satisfied with the minimum standard hitherto aimed at, viz., a bare numerical preponderance over the combined fleets of France and Russia. But there are two important considerations which absolutely destroy the efficacy of the argument that, because our Navy is strong, we do not need a large Army.*

1. Though Great Britain is an island, the British Empire is not. We have in Canada the second largest land frontier in the world, and outside Europe we are a Continental Power in the strict sense of the word. Our fleet cannot go to Pretoria, nor to Cabul, and it is not easy to see how our Navy would help us if we wished to prevent China from being swallowed up by the Russian Bear, or if Menelik were to take it into his head to hurl his splendid Abyssinian

* In his speech at the great Primrose League meeting at the Albert Hall, in May, 1900, Lord Salisbury said: 'Of course, we have the Navy, and I firmly believe that that will be sufficient. But considering the prodigious, the enormous interests that we have to safeguard, is it wise that all our eggs should be put in a single basket? Are we not bound to think of our national defence on land?'

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troops upon our weak garrisons in the Soudan.* And let it be remembered that we entered upon the war with the Transvaal under circumstances so exceptionally favourable that even the most optimistic believers in our 'luck' can never expect them to occur again. It is admitted on all hands that this war with two comparatively insignificant States has placed an enormous strain upon the military resources of Great Britain—nay, of the Empire itself. Yet there is nothing fanciful in the idea that we might, at any time in the last three years, have been *simultaneously* involved in war with France, on the Fashoda question; with Russia, owing to complications in Afghanistan or Persia; with the Khalifa in the Soudan; and with the South African Republics.

Besides these considerations, which point to the necessity of having a large Army for the defence of distant parts of the Empire, it must always be borne in mind that the fact of our possessing a large Home-Defence Army would in itself act as a powerful deterrent to a hostile Power which might otherwise be tempted to

* 'There are at the present moment three battalions of British infantry in Egypt' (Mr. Wyndham's speech on the Army Estimates, March 12, 1900).

play a bold game by breaking through our first defence, in the assurance (and all the chief Continental Powers *have* this assurance) that they would have no formidable difficulties to deal with on land.

2. It is a most dangerous fallacy to imagine that a war can be won by merely warding off blows. Yet, strange to say, while the root idea that governs our naval strategy is to find and destroy the enemy's fleets in his own waters, we behave as if *offensive military* operations were absolutely out of the question. With regard to this, some remarks made by Captain W. H. James at a lecture* delivered before the Military Society of Ireland (Lord Wolseley in the chair), in December, 1894, are very much to the point:

‘Unless we are prepared to have such an army as will enable us to strike on land abroad, it seems to me our decadence is a mere question of time. No passive defence was, or ever will be, successful in the long-run, any more than a pugilist can win a prize-fight by merely warding off his opponent's blow. . . . Supposing we were at war with France or Russia, or both, how could we ever bring it to a successful con-

* ‘The Functions of the Navy and Army in the Maintenance of the British Empire.’

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clusion by naval operations only?*

Russia has no colonies. The naval raids in the Baltic, and on the Eastern Coast of Asia, during the Crimean War, fully demonstrated their futility.

‘With regard to France, after we had captured all her colonies—and even to do this we should require expeditionary forces, especially to conquer Algeria—what else can we do? To blockade either Russia or France would do neither any harm with their land frontiers. It did France very little injury in the old war, and now, with increased facilities of communication, would do still less. . . . Are we, then, to be content with such a land force as is not sufficient to hold our own homes, and absolutely ridiculous for offensive purposes?’

Captain James proceeds to show from history that ‘sea supremacy alone, even such an absolute supremacy as we possessed after 1805, is insufficient for offensive purposes on the Continent.’ After pointing out that there are good reasons for believing that Napoleon’s preparations for an invasion of England were really a blind to divert attention from his projected invasion of Germany, he goes on to show that

* This point is clearly recognised by the author of ‘The New Battle of Dorking.’

the defeat of Trafalgar was of little avail to prevent the Corsican's triumphant progress for the next nine years, which were the greatest in his life. It was 'the Spanish sore' (in Napoleon's own words) which wore him out.*

Again, it was the want of a sufficient army that lost us the American Colonies.†

For from 1775 to 1778 we had the command of the sea, yet we never had more than 15,000 troops on American soil. With proper military organization we could have sent 50,000 early in the war and so ended it before our ill-success on land tempted first France, then Spain, and finally Holland, to 'intervene'‡ in the struggle—a consideration which gives much food for thought at the present moment (March, 1900).

* The *Revue des Deux Mondes* of February, 1900, speaking of the campaign in the Peninsula and of the lines of Torres-Vedras, says: 'Wellington held at bay all the efforts of Napoleon's armies; vainly they dashed themselves against that wall of iron, yet they were composed of heroic soldiers led by generals used to *la grande guerre*. . . . The English were invincible behind those "lines," and when they emerged from them it was to drive Napoleon's armies from the whole Iberian Peninsula.'

† I refer, of course, only to the material, not to the moral and political, causes of that loss.

‡ This 'intervention' deprived us of the command of the seas, and so made it *impossible* for us to issue victorious from the American War.

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One word more before I pass to a consideration of our Navy. Our statesmen and people alike have got into the way of talking as if we *only* needed to look upon our armaments as means of defence. But apart from the fact I have mentioned—that offensive operations are the best means of defence—is it an impossible thing that we ourselves might be forced by circumstances to take the offensive?*

Having shown that we cannot be satisfied with a Navy alone if our Empire is to be safe from attack, let us now examine carefully how we stand with regard to the command of the sea. I shall, no doubt, be told that our Navy, at least, is far stronger than it was at the beginning of the century. To this I answer that *absolutely* it is indeed stronger† than ever

* The Morocco question, which has been recently (March, 1900) occupying the attention of the public, affords an excellent example of the kind I had in mind when I wrote these words. If France were to attempt to gain possession of Morocco, or even of a fortified post on the coast, such as Ceuta, it would be impossible for England to remain passive; such a line of action would imperil our position in the Mediterranean, and we should be forced to take the offensive to prevent it.

† The lamentable thing about it is that this great recent increase of strength is not due to any statesmanlike foresight nor to a clear policy which would calculate the extent of our defensive forces upon the basis of national or

it was (except in personnel); but I shall prove that it is far weaker now than at the beginning of the century, relatively—

(1) To the expansion of the Empire and the enormous responsibilities it entails on the Navy.

(2) To the extraordinary development of the naval power of other nations, some of which had no existence on the seas at the beginning of the century, or, indeed, fifty—nay, thirty—years ago.

What was England's position as a naval Power at the beginning of the century? It is best summed up in the words of Captain Mahan: 'At this time (1801) the British Navy was

Imperial needs. 'The intelligent anticipation of the future' is not the business of our statesmen. No; it has been forced upon the Government by the voice of public opinion which was awakened by the patriotic agitation of the Navy League. 'The reinforcement of the Navy, upon which we have substantial reasons to congratulate ourselves, had its origin in a great movement of public opinion, and without that movement we may safely affirm it would not have been effected' (*Times*, November 8, 1899). Similarly, all recent Army Reform has been due to like exertions on the part of men such as Mr. Arnold-Forster, Mr. Spenser Wilkinson, and Sir Charles Dilke. Truly, in matters of National Defence we have never yet had a *Government* (*gubernare*=to steer, to guide), but a body of excellent gentlemen, who placidly wait until they are *pushed* to their duty—the organization of the defence of the country. (N.B.—Since I wrote these words I am glad to say an Army League has been formed.)

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superior to the combined forces of all Europe.* The only important navies besides our own were those of France and Spain, and throughout the Napoleonic wars we always had a very considerable preponderance over the fleets of France, or France and Spain, during the short period in which they were combined against us. The following quotation from Mr. C. McL. McHardy's admirable little work, 'The British Navy for a Hundred Years' (to which I am indebted for most of the facts here quoted with regard to the Navy), will fully illustrate the commanding position we held at that time on the ocean:

'The relative strength of the British and French Navies at about that period, 1794-1805, may be judged from the following figures, abstracted from Parliamentary Return No. 168 of 1860 :

		British.	French.	Proportion of British to French.
1794	{ Ships of the line ...	145	77	About 6 to 3
	{ Frigates ...	176	72	Nearly $7\frac{1}{2}$ to 3
	Total ...	321	149	Rather more than 6 to 3
1804	{ Ships of the line ...	175	50	Exactly $10\frac{1}{2}$ to 3
	{ Frigates ...	244	32	Rather more than $22\frac{1}{2}$ to 3
	Total ...	419	82	Rather more than 15 to 3

* 'The Influence of Sea-Power upon the French Revolution and Empire.'

Mr. McHardy adds : ' That this preponderance of British ships was not more than was necessary is evident from the fact that, in the war which commenced in 1793, whenever our fleets met the enemy the superiority of numbers was on the side of France, *because of the many other demands on our fleets.* In 1805 we had eighty-three line of battle ships actually in commission, while France had but thirty-seven, and Spain twenty-four—total sixty-one ; yet we could at Trafalgar only bring twenty-seven ships into line against thirty-three of their combined fleet, *our other fifty-six ships being engaged in defence of our Colonies and commerce in various parts of the world.*'*

On page 53 of the same work the following

* The italics are my own, as I wish to insist on the fact that, with a preponderance over hostile fleets of fifteen to three—the Danish fleet had been annihilated in 1801—the demands on our Navy for the protection of an Empire of about 1,500,000 square miles, and a total British tonnage of about 2,500,000, were such that we could never reckon on a superiority of numbers in a naval battle. To-day we have to protect an Empire of 11,000,000 square miles, a sea-borne commerce of the value of £1,132,000,000, and a total British tonnage of nearly 13,000,000, with a Navy which has a bare preponderance (though even *that* is disputed by some naval experts) over the navies of France and Russia ; while if one only of the many possible hostile Powers were to throw its weight into the balance, we should be actually in a considerable *minority*.

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description is given of 'our state of preparation when our two last great naval wars occurred, viz., 1793 to 1801 and 1803 to 1815.

'In 1772 we had 11,575 seamen and 4,425 marines, a total of 16,000 men; 211 ships in commission and 197 in reserve, building, etc., a total of 408 ships; during the war we lost 59 ships with 1,272 guns, but we captured from the enemy or destroyed (exclusive of 903 privateers) 570 ships with 15,936 guns—a large proportion of these were taken into the service of the Royal Navy; the press-gang was available for manning them—with the result that to close the war in 1801 we had 105,000 seamen, 30,000 marines, a total of 135,000 men; 833 ships in commission, 213 in reserve, building, etc., making a total of 946 ships.

'For the second of these wars, 1803 to 1815, we had at the commencement 38,000 seamen, 12,000 marines, a total of 50,000 men; during the war we captured from the enemy or destroyed 569 more ships—with the result that in 1810 we had 113,600 seamen, 31,400 marines, a total of 145,000 men and 1,239 ships.'

Trafalgar practically annihilated the fleets of France and Spain: 'From 1807 no organized French fleet existed. In 1811 Lord Minto

announced that the French flag was nowhere to be seen flying from Cape Comorin to Cape Horn.*

The Danish fleet we had destroyed in 1801, and in 1807 we seized the new one they had built, to prevent its falling into the hands of Napoleon. So that, in the literal sense of the word, in spite of the loss of some single-ship actions in the war with the United States in 1812,† Britain truly 'ruled the waves' from Trafalgar onward, 'having won a naval prestige which still endures, and which happily sufficed as a protection during many years in which the Navy was shamefully neglected.'‡

In comparing our present naval strength with that which we possessed at the beginning of the century, we cannot simply add up the ships in each case and draw our conclusions from the totals as we do in the case of the army, and even the personnel of the navy.§

* 'The Functions of the Navy and Army in the Maintenance of the British Empire' (Captain W. H. James).

† See 'The British Navy, Past and Present' (Captain S. Eardley-Wilmot, R.N.).

‡ 'The Defence of the Empire and the Militia Ballot' (Colonel Sir G. S. Clarke, *Nineteenth Century*, January, 1900).

§ The men and the money voted in 1805 and 1898 were :

		Men.	Money Vote.
1805	...	120,000	£15,035,630
1898	...	105,232	£23,778,400

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The only way to arrive at a just estimate of our naval power is to compare our forces with those of our rivals and possible foes on the one hand, and with the task our Navy would have to fulfil in time of war on the other.

Before entering upon such a comparison, however, it may be well to point out one or two obvious facts as to the disadvantages to us which the change from sails to steam-power has effected in naval warfare :

1. We lose the advantage which superior seamanship always conferred upon us in our struggles with France and Spain.* Seamanship has given way to engineering,† and it is at least doubtful whether in this matter we are superior to the French, Germans, Russians, Americans, or Japanese.

2. The task of blockading an enemy's fleet in harbour becomes an infinitely more difficult one than in the old days, when our ships of the line could lie off the enemy's coast for months with-

* 'English pluck and superior seamanship, which won our victories in the past, are discounted by steam and machinery' (Admiral Close, in an interview with a representative of the *Daily Graphic*).

† A fact that has been practically recognised by the abolition of the old training squadron of sailing ships. See also recent correspondence in the *Times* on the subject, August, 1900.

out any difficulty except that of provisions. Now, when war-vessels must at least have their fires banked up ready for full steam, the enormous consumption of coal makes it imperative that blockading ships should be relieved by others of equal strength at pretty frequent intervals—a fact which must therefore also be taken into account in comparing the numbers of our ships with those of other fleets. It is hardly necessary to point out that this difficulty is one that affects us only, for it is an axiom with us that the first task of our Navy is to destroy the enemy's fleets or blockade them in their own ports; *their* task would be to prey upon our commerce, and land expeditions in our Colonies, or invade England after drawing off our main fleet in chase of a powerful squadron sent to attack some distant possession.

3. The advent of steam has reduced the narrow strip of sea which divides England from France to a distance that can easily be crossed in three or four hours by a fleet of transports, while the Channel is blocked at either end by squadrons which would be sacrificed if necessary to secure the landing of an invading army of 150,000 men. The important thing to remember in this connection is that all this could be

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planned beforehand with the greatest secrecy for a definite day and hour, whereas formerly such an attempt would have had to depend upon the chance of wind and weather.*

Keeping these facts in mind, let us see what is our position as a naval Power now in comparison to what it was at the beginning of the century, when, as I have shown, we were not only supreme, but practically alone, on the seas after 1805.

While at that period France and, for a time, Spain were the only formidable naval Powers besides our own, a very different state of things exists now. France, it is true, still heads the list with a splendid navy; but besides France there are nations, some of which in a certain sense did not even count as Powers at the period

* The *Marine Française* of May, 1900, discussing the scheme of an invasion of England, which is the subject of continual study in France, says: 'We entreat the general staff of the Army to study thoroughly this vital question of the passage of the Channel and landing in England. . . . To rely upon a successful action between the two fleets to allow of a landing at some point, necessarily known in advance, is a mere dream. If the crossing of our troops and their landing are to be effected successfully, the enemy must know neither the objective, nor the place of disembarkation, nor the hour of the attack; in a word, they must be surprised.' (See 'The New Battle of Dorking' for an admirable description of a surprise raid without previous declaration of war.)

I refer to, which now have strong and ever-increasing navies.

Russia, which at the beginning of the century for practical purposes had no existence on the seas, now stands third with a large and powerful navy, which she is constantly, one may say feverishly, increasing. It is a significant fact that, while her commerce is still very small in comparison with that of the other European countries, she 'is building an extravagant number of cruisers, which can only be used against England.'* It is worthy of note, too, that Sir Charles Dilke's prediction (March, 1897), that by the end of the century the combined French and Russian fleets would nearly equal ours, is being fully verified, for the naval forces of the Dual Alliance have been for some years increasing at a far greater rate than that which has been maintained by our Navy.†

* See 'The Naval Situation' (H. W. Wilson, *Nineteenth Century*, April, 1899).

† It is, of course, quite impossible within the limits of the present work to adequately discuss the whole question of our naval programmes in comparison with those of the other Powers. I can only touch briefly here upon the main points. Those who wish to make themselves more fully acquainted with a subject of such vital importance to our Empire should join the Navy League, which, by means of its journal and the pamphlets it issues, keeps its members fully posted in every-

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Germany, in spite of an unfavourable geographical position for a naval Power and a paucity of good harbours, has felt the need of a strong navy for the protection of her growing commerce and for those purposes of colonial expansion which the rapid growth of her population seems to call for.*

The observant foreigner—say, Madame de Staël—who saw the curious jumble of independent States and petty principalities which at the beginning of the century was styled Germany would little have dreamed that this heterogeneous mass was destined, after bitter struggles, apparently doomed to failure (witness the attempts of 1848), to issue from the crucible of two great wars a strong amalgam, strong in national unity, strong in the national conscript army by which that unity was achieved, strong, too, in a steadily growing navy: for Germany, ever ready to learn from those best able to

thing pertaining to our sea-power. I would particularly recommend Mr. C. McL. McHardy's book, 'The British Navy for a Hundred Years.'

* It has been calculated that by the year 1950, if the present rate of increase continues, there will be 240,000,000 Russians and 120,000,000 Germans in Europe, and barely 40,000,000 English and Welsh people ('The Rush to Ruin, and the Remedy,' George Quick).

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teach, went to school in England, and learnt her lesson well, if what good judges say of her navy be true. That navy now stands fourth on the list.*

The United States have learnt the need of a strong navy in the late war with Spain and in the growing responsibilities which their new policy of expansion brings with it, and their present programme shows how energetically they are setting about a task which their enormous resources render a comparatively easy one.

Italy, which till 1860 was but a geographical expression for a loosely-connected group of independent States, is now a united nation, possessing a navy which comes sixth in order of strength, and which is hardly second to that of France itself in the Mediterranean,† if we con-

* Since I wrote these words, in October, 1899, the programme under which the German navy is to be *doubled* by 1917 at the *latest* has been submitted to, and accepted by, the Reichstag. In his speech delivered December 10, 1899, the Imperial Chancellor indicated that it was hoped that the programme would be completed much sooner. Admiral Tirpitz, in supporting the Navy Bill, left no doubt in the mind of his hearers that Germany was entering upon this huge expenditure in order, sooner or later, to dispute England's supremacy on the seas, and the Press has been even more candid in announcing the same fact.

† At the same time, it is undeniable that Italy, owing to financial difficulties, is gradually dropping out of the running

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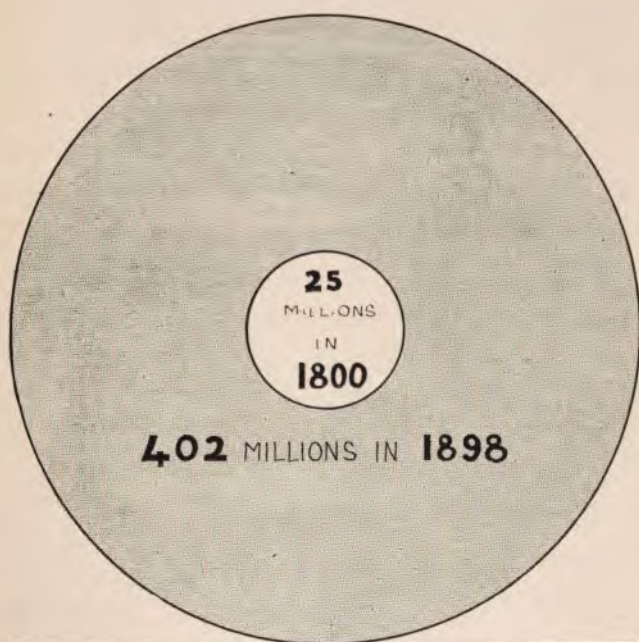
sider the fact that Italy has no possessions except on the Red Sea, whereas France has to protect Colonies in Cochin China, Madagascar, and West Africa, as well as Algiers.

Finally, there is that questionable Power, Japan, which has suddenly sprung into vigorous existence in the Far East, and which seems fully determined that her power on the sea shall be as formidable and efficient as her military forces.*

‘ Thus, then, in the course of the next twenty years or so we shall have to make our calculations not merely with a French and a Russian Navy, but with five Powers—France, Russia, the United States, Germany and Japan—each of which will have to be regarded as a first-rate naval nation. When, therefore, we talk of possible combinations at sea, we must revise the old hypotheses. It is no longer a case of keeping ahead of one or two rivals, but of five, and, looking at the chances and changes of inter-

in the matter of ship-building. It takes her six to seven years to complete a battle-ship, while England takes three, and France four. (See ‘The Naval Situation,’ H. W. Wilson, *Nineteenth Century*, April, 1899.) This is a fact not without importance in relation to our own position on the seas.

* How ‘formidable and efficient’ the latter are has been clearly demonstrated by the advance on Pekin, in which the Japanese forces played such a distinguished part.



THE POPULATION OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE IN 1800
AND IN 1898. (*See p. 19.*)

national politics, it cannot be said that a hostile league of three or four, or, under certain contingencies, the whole five of these States against us is unthinkable. Cobden, in an oft-quoted passage, asserted that we must maintain our naval supremacy even if it cost us a hundred millions annually to do so; but one may doubt whether even that enormous expenditure would enable us to retain* an unchallengeable superiority over all rivals.

Let us now briefly compare the strength of the chief fleets of the world.

The following table gives the number of the line of battle ships (including battleships and armoured cruisers) belonging to the seven chief naval Powers. It is compiled from the figures

* 'The Military Weakness of England,' etc., Sidney Low. It is interesting to note that, if we had spent as much on the Navy in 1895, in proportion to sea-borne trade, as we did in 1801, our expenditure in that year would have been £112,000,000, £12,000,000 more than the sum Cobden mentioned as an imaginary figure. The cost of the Navy in 1801 was 16 per cent. of the value of our sea-borne trade; now (1900), 'with Estimates of £27,522,000, it is only a little over 1½ per cent. upon the value of that trade, accepting Mr. Thursfield's figures' (*Navy League Journal*, March, 1900, p. 36).

	Population.	Navy Estimates.	Sea-borne Trade.
1801 ...	15,000,000	£18,000,000	£112,000,000
1899 ...	40,000,000	£27,500,000	£1,243,536,000

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given by Captain Eardley-Wilmot and Mr. H. W. Wilson, from the 'Statesman's Year-Book' (1900) and from Parliamentary Return 313 of 1899, and includes ships built, building, and approved in January, 1900 :*

	England.	France.	Russia.	Germany.	U.S.	Italy.	Japan.
Battleships	64	40	29	22	26	15	7
Armoured cruisers (modern)	23	18	7	2	5	6	7

It will be seen that, while we had twenty-three armoured cruisers to twenty-five of the Dual Alliance, we had only sixty-four battleships to their sixty-nine; 'whereas to oppose sixty-nine, acting from their own ports, we should possess ninety.† How, then, can it be assumed that we are in any way equal to a combination of two Powers?' (Captain Eardley-Wilmot).

The following table by Mr. H. W. Wilson

* The programmes for 1900 are not, however, included.

† 'Under the altered conditions which steam and the development of attack by locomotive torpedoes have introduced into Naval Warfare, it will not be found practicable to maintain an effective blockade of an enemy's squadrons in strongly fortified ports without the blockading battleships being in the proportion of at least *five to three*, to allow a sufficient margin for casualties' (Government Report of the Committee on Naval Manœuvres, 1888, signed by three Admirals, one of whom is now First Sea Lord). Admiral Sir Geoffrey Hornby held that our strength for blockading purposes must be *two to one*.

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(January, 1900) gives the naval strength of England, France and Russia in fuller detail :

	England.	France.	Russia.	France and Russia.
Standard battleships ...	64	40	29	69
Armoured cruisers (modern) ...	23	18	7	25
Older ironclads and coast defence ...	24	15	15	30
Modern cruisers ...	119	42	18	60
Torpedo craft ...	338	330	245	575

‘Sixteen of our battleships are to-day armed, wholly or in part, with muzzle-loading guns ; seven of our armoured cruisers are in a similar plight’ (Navy League Report for the year 1899).

The situation has changed slightly in our favour since the above table was drawn up, for, ‘taking only ships ready for sea and those of the most important classes’ (Mr. H. W. Wilson, *Navy League Journal*, November, 1899), while we have only thirty-two battleships to thirty-nine of the combined fleets, we have a very great preponderance in cruisers, viz., 123 to 43.

The following tables and quotations taken from Mr. Wilson’s article, ‘The Naval Situation in the Nineteenth Century’ (April, 1899), will give a somewhat more detailed survey of our position. ‘A very good idea of the relative position of the seven great Powers may be

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obtained by examining the figures for battleships (1) launched in the two decennial periods 1879-1888 and 1889-1898, and (2) on the stocks at the beginning of this year, or projected under the naval programmes for 1899 :

	Launched.				Building or Projected.		Total.	
	1879-1888.		1889-1898.		1899.			
	Ships.	Tons.	Ships.	Tons.	Ships.	Tons.	Ships.	Tons.
England	17	160,700	26	363,300	12	170,000	55	694,000
France ...	14	131,200	15	154,600	2	27,200	31	313,000
Russia ...	4	40,000	16	145,100	8	93,400	28	278,500
Germany	2	12,600	7	73,900	5	55,000	14	141,500
Japan ...	—	—	3	40,000	3	45,000	6	85,000
Italy ...	6	79,100	4	43,700	3	40,500	13	163,300
U.S.A.	—	—	13	121,200	6	78,000	19	199,200

It will be noticed that, according to this table, our battleships are fifty-five to the fifty-nine of France and Russia ; nor must anyone be misled by the fact that the tonnage of our fifty-five is greater than that of the fifty-nine of the Dual Alliance. For, our ships being intended to have a much wider radius of action, necessarily have to possess an enormous capacity for coal storage ; hence our ships of 14,000 tons are, even by the Government, reckoned as equal to those of 12,000 tons of other Powers.

‘ Next, taking cruisers launched during the

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ten years 1889-1898, and building in January, 1899, the figures are :

			Launched.		Building or Projected.		Total.	
			1889-1898.		1899.			
			Ships.	Tons.	Ships.	Tons.	Ships.	Tons.
England	...	...	74	418,000	19	184,400	93	602,400
France	...	...	35	135,200	16	120,400	51	255,600
Russia	...	...	3	26,900	21	109,000	24	135,900
Germany	...	...	16	64,800	5	20,200	21	85,000
Japan	...	...	14	65,400	7	48,400	21	113,800
Italy	...	...	10	33,700	4	23,700	14	57,300
U.S.A.	...	...	15	66,600	9	52,500	24	119,100

‘The figures, however, given above by no means represent the naval activity of France. For the last two years she has been spending very large sums upon the complete reconstruction and rearmament of her older ships. In 1898-99, she laid out no less than £1,200,000, while this year she will spend £650,000 in this way. The battleships *Hoche*, *Caiman*, *Requin*, *Terrible*, *Furieux*, *Marceau*, *Dévastation*, *Courbet*, *Redoutable*, *Neptune*, *Duperré*, *Magenta*, *Indomptable*, and *Baudin*, have recently undergone, or are now to undergo, drastic alterations. Nothing on this scale has been attempted in England. As one consequence, France was in the autumn of 1898 hopelessly unready for war ;

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in 1900, however, the tables will be turned, and this formidable fleet of rejuvenated ironclads will confront our older ships, which are year by year—as nothing is done to them—becoming less formidable. As in 1900 several of the new Russian battleships and cruisers will be ready for sea, *this will be a critical time for England*.*

‘Not till the spring of last year (*i.e.*, 1898) were cruisers steaming 23 knots laid down by us, when the startling admission was made by Mr. Goschen that we had nothing afloat that could catch the French 23-knot ships of the *Guichen*, *Château-Renault*, *Jeanne d'Arc* and *Jurien de la Gravière* type. Six 23-knot cruisers were accordingly added to our programme in 1898, but not one of these ships will be ready for sea before 1902, whereas four of the Russian 23 and 25 knot ships, and five French 23-knot vessels, should be ready in 1900 or 1901.†

The Navy League Report for the year 1899 says :

‘The latest official return [Parliamentary

* The italics are mine.

† It is worth noticing that Germany now possesses, or will soon have, four ships in the mercantile marine (available as additional cruisers. in time of war), none of which can be overtaken by any British ship afloat.

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Paper 313 of 1899] gives us only thirty-six modern battleships ready for thirty-eight of the two next strongest navies. Nelson said : "Only numbers can annihilate." In armoured cruisers we have only nine modern ships, against fifteen ships of the two next navies. These navies have built sixteen battleships against our seventeen, and fourteen armoured cruisers against our fourteen.'

'Admiral Hornby considered, in 1888, that we required 186 cruisers for commerce protection.*

'We have . . . 122 cruisers built, and twelve building. On Admiral Hornby's calculations we are over fifty cruisers short. Russia and France . . . have forty-six cruisers built and twelve building. That is to say, they are building as many ships in this class as Britain. . . . We have built, building and projected sixteen cruisers of 21 knots and over. France has two ships of 23 knots, or over, ready for service. Russia will have three ready next winter. Of cruisers possessing a speed of 21 knots and over, built and building, France

* It is hardly necessary to point out that this figure would have to be considerably increased now, in order to maintain the *proportion of strength* which Admiral Hornby considered necessary.

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has fifteen, Russia six, Germany two, America eleven (including projected), Japan ten.'

The Naval Estimates for 1900 have been universally condemned as inadequate. In the letter sent to the press throughout the country by the Navy League on February 20, 1900, it is affirmed that: 'To render our position secure we require at least twenty more battleships. As our resources, taking into account the number of ships still incomplete, would not permit such an immediate augmentation, we urge that provision be made in the current naval estimates for commencing ten new battleships.' The Estimates provide for *two* battleships. In the same letter it is urged 'that provision be made for commencing thirty cruisers of the highest speed.' The Estimates provide for *six* large armoured cruisers and one protected cruiser.

A very serious feature of the whole matter is the statement made by Mr. Goschen that we are now building as rapidly as is possible with our present resources and dockyard accommodation. 'For in that case it becomes vital to extend our dockyards and ship-building plant, since very large programmes are being undertaken abroad by Russia, France and Germany, which may compel us to the utmost activity.

Yet there is no hint of any such intention in the statement on the Estimates.*

Before we leave the question of the adequacy of the Navy, I must refer briefly to two important points by which its efficiency is most seriously impaired.

1. The inadequacy of our Naval Reserve.

While in 1899 we had over 105,000 men in the active Navy, including officers, seamen and boys, Coastguards and Royal Marines (the number voted was 110,640), our Naval Reserves were only 25,712 (the number voted was 26,750); and the number enrolled was over a thousand *less* than in 1898. It must be remembered, too, that even this small number is not a Reserve in any real sense of the word, seeing that it would be required to bring the peace complements of our ships up to war strength at the very commencement of hostilities.†

* *Navy League Journal*, March, 1900. This question of dockyard accommodation was commented on in the article on 'The Naval Situation' in April, 1899, to which I have frequently had occasion to refer. Since the above was written, a meeting has been held by the Navy League (March 28) to protest against Mr. Goschen's statements.

† I can do no more than hint here at the very grave danger indicated by the 'starving of the engine-rooms,' *i.e.*, by the inadequacy, in point of numbers, of the engineering branch of the Navy.

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The other naval Powers with their *inscription maritime* (the United States have a Naval Militia) have an almost unlimited reserve from which to supply the casualties of war. Intimately connected with the difficulty, hitherto insuperable, of providing a sufficient Naval Reserve is the ever-increasing proportion of foreigners in the Mercantile Marine, from which our Naval Reserve men are largely drawn. This proportion has risen from 9 per cent. in 1860 to 40·83 in 1897.* (Now, 1900, it is about 45 per cent.)

The Right Hon. C. T. Ritchie, M.P., referring to the result which this circumstance would bring about if the Naval Reserves were called out, said (February 28, 1899): 'The result would be to deplete British ships of British seamen; and instead of being partially manned by foreigners, they would, under existing circumstances, be altogether manned by foreigners. That, I think, is matter for very great regret; and if any suggestion can be made to remedy that state of things, or to endeavour to remedy that state of things, which the whole House regrets, then the House would do wrong not to consider any suggestion that might be made.'

* The Navy League report for the year 1899.

Yet, as if there were an absolute *embarras de richesse* in the way of Naval Reserves, the Government a short time ago disbanded the Naval Volunteers, who corresponded to the American Naval Militia referred to above, which, 'though it exhibited many defects, rendered invaluable service in the late war' (Mr. H. W. Wilson, 'The Naval Situation'). This policy is of a piece with that which impelled the War Office, 'for some reason never yet explained, and not easy to understand,' to destroy four batteries of Royal Horse Artillery in 1891 (*vide* 'Our Home Army,' H. O. Arnold-Forster).

2. The want of a Naval College for the study of tactics and for the higher education and technical training of our officers.

In our naval officers we possess a body of men imbued with the highest ideals of duty, and thoroughly keen on acquiring all the latest knowledge requisite to render them thoroughly efficient in their profession. At the same time, there is perhaps a danger that the British Navy may be inclined to rely too much on the prestige which its glorious history has conferred upon it, and to neglect those higher studies which are nowadays required of an officer, no less than of a professional man. In this connection one

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cannot help calling to mind the following words from Sir Charles Dilke's 'Problems of Greater Britain' (vol. ii., p. 537) with regard to the self-confidence of France before the Franco-German War: 'In 1870 France felt and showed the same confidence in her military superiority that we have in the naval supremacy of Great Britain. . . . It had been taken for granted that a system which had once raised France to a pinnacle of military glory was good enough for the present and the future, and that, when war began, *dash and valour would suffice.*'*

With regard to this need for the higher tactical training of our naval officers, Mr. H. W. Wilson says: 'Greenwich does not do the work of the French Ecole Navale Supérieure, of the new Russian Superior Naval School, or of the American College at Newport, which, according to the Assistant-Secretary of the United States Navy, "has rendered valuable service in stimulating our officers of highest rank to professional advancement." "We alone," says Sir George

* The latter words might well have been written with reference to the officers of our Army, who, with a valour that has never been surpassed, have shown in many instances during the present war an ignorance and a neglect of the ordinary rules of tactics and strategy which have cost the country their lives and those of hundreds of their men.

Clarke, "in full accordance with our national characteristics, neglect to include applied naval science in our system of naval education. Such neglect is dangerous!" It is indeed; and more, its ultimate effects may be disastrous. "War was formerly an instinct; now it is a science. The mastery of a science requires study," says the American Professor Soley.*

Lord Charles Beresford expressed himself very strongly on the same subject just before he took up his present command of the Mediterranean Fleet.†

Having compared our Navy with those of the chief foreign Powers as regards numbers, let us now see what is the task that our fleets would be called upon to fulfil in the event of war. That task may be summarized under four headings:

1. To blockade the Hostile Squadrons in their own ports.
2. To place a Reserve Squadron near England.
3. To protect our Trade.
4. To protect our Coaling-Stations.

* 'The Naval Situation' (*Nineteenth Century*, April, 1899).

† See also an article on 'The Education of our Naval Officers,' by A. C. D., in the *United Service Magazine* of August, 1900.

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1. To blockade the Hostile Squadrons.

In the early part of the century our superiority over hostile fleets varied from about six to three, in 1794, to fifteen to three in 1804;* and in 1805 we had (before Trafalgar) eighty-three battleships to sixty-one of the combined French and Spanish Navies. We have seen that this superiority was far from being more than was necessary, seeing that we were always outnumbered in our naval battles—a risk we could not afford to take nowadays, owing to altered conditions of war.

According to Admiral Sir Geoffrey Hornby, we require a superiority in battleships of *two to one*—according to the Three Admirals' Report of at least *five to three*—in order to 'maintain an effective blockade of the enemy's squadrons.'

Taking the *latest* Naval Return, we find that (deducting obsolete vessels) we have thirty-eight battleships built and seventeen building, to thirty-seven built and sixteen building of France and Russia alone.

2. To place a Reserve Squadron near England.

'We had a squadron in the Channel all through the Trafalgar campaigns.†

* 'The British Navy for a Hundred Years,' C. McL. McHardy.

† Navy League Pamphlet D 1, p. 3.

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The Three Admirals' Report said: 'There should always be an effective reserve squadron, *absolutely confined to home waters*, sufficient to hold the Channel and protect the coasts and commerce of the United Kingdom, in addition to the coast-defence ships, which would be required for active local defence.'

To this the Lords of the Admiralty replied: '*This would be impossible.*' In view of the ratio of strength which our fleet possesses in relation to those of France and Russia, this answer is hardly surprising.

3. To protect our Trade.

In 1801 our trade (exports and imports) was worth £112,000,000; in 1895 it was worth £700,000,000. In 1801 the total British tonnage (net) was 2,812,000; in 1895 it was 12,969,951.*

The following table shows the mercantile marine of the chief countries of the world in 1898:†

* Gross tonnage ('The British Navy for a Hundred Years,' C. McL. McHardy).

† Taken from Lloyd's 'Register of British and Foreign Shipping.'

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Countries.				Number of Ships.	Tonnage : Net of Sailing Vessels and Gross of Steamers (approximately).
British {	United Kingdom ...	...	...	9,044	12,588,000
	Colonies ...	...	...	2,099	1,077,000
Total ...				11,143	13,665,000
United States ...				3,150	2,448,000
Germany ...				1,604	2,114,000
Norway ...				1,663	1,643,000
France ...				1,151	1,179,000
Italy ...				1,162	855,000
Spain ...				722	621,000
Russia ...				1,159	594,000
Sweden ...				1,373	552,000
Japan ...				532	470,000

In 1899 the total number of steamships and sailing-vessels in the world of 100 tons register and upwards, according to Lloyd's Register, was 28,180, and their estimated tonnage 27,673,528. Of this number nearly 11,000 were British, with a tonnage of nearly 14,000,000.

I give below the table of Navies and Commerce, 1899, taken from the Navy League pamphlet D3, dated March, 1900 :

NAVIES AND COMMERCE.

(Compiled from Parliamentary Return No. 310 of 1899.)

Annual Value of Sea-borne Commerce.

$\frac{1}{4}$ inch to 100 million £.				British Empire	£1,243,536,011*
	—	...	...	France	£313,995,000
	—	...	...	Russia†	£80,970,000
	—	...	...	Germany	£502,811,000‡
	—	...	...	Italy	£73,493,000
	—	...	...	United States	£403,341,000

According to Mr. Thursfield, £350,000,000 worth of foreign commerce is carried in British ships.

Mercantile Marine Tonnage.

$\frac{1}{4}$ inch to 1 million.				British Empire	10,250,450
	—	...	...	France	900,288
	—	...	...	Russia†	605,804
	—	...	...	Germany§	1,555,371
	—	...	...	Italy§	786,644
	—	...	...	United States	737,709

* This includes all Canadian trade ; sea imports and exports not shown separately, including also bullion and specie.

† 1897.

‡ Total trade ; sea imports and exports not distinguished.

§ 1898.

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Naval Expenditure per Ton of Shipping (or Rate of Insurance).

‡ inch to £1 per ton.	United Kingdom*	£2	4	10
			France ...	£13	6	4
			Russia† ...	£11	1	4
		...	Germany*	£3	18	2
			Italy* ...	£5	8	2
			United States ...	£13	1	0

The total ocean or sea-borne commerce of the *four* European Powers above named is as 70 only to 100 of British commerce; their shipping or mercantile marine tonnage is only as 27 to 100 of British; while their naval expenditure is as 126 to 100 of ours; and the average of their naval expenditure per ton of shipping owned by them is as 400 to 100 of British expenditure on the Navy as compared with our shipping.

These figures speak for themselves. But they become truly appalling in their significance when we remember that the words 'trade' and 'commerce' cover 'food-supply.' These words 'our food-supply' open up a question so tremendous in its bearing upon our very existence as a nation that it may truly be said that all other questions of the adequacy of our naval and military resources sink into comparative insignificance beside it. It is a question with which, however, I shall not attempt to deal, especially as the whole subject has been fully treated by

* 1897.

† 1898.

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Mr. R. B. Marston in his admirable work on the subject, 'War, Famine, and our Food-supply' (1897).*

I shall content myself here with citing a few salient facts which will illustrate how absolutely we are dependent upon the strength of our Navy to save us, not merely from defeat, but from starvation in time of war; and I think it will be admitted that I am justified in drawing from those facts an additional reason for regarding our Navy as being far weaker relatively to the demands it will have to fulfil than it was a hundred years ago.

Curiously enough, Mr. Marston (whose book I only became acquainted with long after I began my own) starts by instituting a comparison between 'Our Position in 1800 and Now.'

He shows that though 'at this time [1801] the British Navy was superior to the combined forces of all Europe,' and though 'we grew nearly all the corn we required at home' for our then population of 14,000,000, yet 'the people of these islands were throughout the year 1800, and partly in 1801, on the brink of famine. . . . Deficient harvests raised the price of wheat to

* See also 'An Address on our Food-supplies in Time of War' (Thomas G. Read).

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134s. a quarter in 1800, and to 156s. a quarter in the spring of 1801. . . . On the 5th of March [of that year] the price of the quartern loaf was 1s. 10½d.,* and a shilling at that time had a far greater purchasing power than it has to-day.

On p. 35 Mr. Marston quotes the following figures from the 'Corn Trade Year-Book':

	Quarters.
Net consumption of breadstuffs in this country during twelve months ended 1894-95, exclusive of wheat fed on the farms or used for seed	29,344,377
Total import of wheat and flour	25,078,300
Grown at home	7,588,000

'The difference between these two sets of figures—viz., about 3,300,000 quarters—would practically mean the quantity consumed on the farm for feeding stock and the quantity used for seed.

*'Principal Corn-exporting Countries to United Kingdom.
Flour reckoned as Wheat.*

Countries.	Distance.†	Quarters.
United States	3,000 miles	10,920,000
Russia	{ 3,420 miles to Odessa 1,160 " Riga }	5,410,000
Argentina	6,000 miles	3,843,000
India	6,217 "	1,497,000
Canada (about)	2,500 "	1,077,000
Australia (Cape route)	12,000 "	988,000
Uruguay	5,900 "	128,500
Chili	8,800 "	295,600

* Knight, 'History of England,' quoted by Mr. Marston.

† I have added the distances, taken from Mr. Marston's graphic diagram at the beginning of his book.

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It will be seen that we import more than 25,000,000 quarters of wheat out of the 29,000,000 which we consume; and that, 'enormous as it is, it is only *half* the total amount of grain imported, which includes maize, barley, oats, rye, etc.' (p. 44).

The figures quoted by Mr. McHardy* show the same dangerous state of things viewed from another standpoint :

	1801.	1895.
Population	15,000,000	39,000,000
Population fed on—		
Wheat, home produce ...	14,000,000	11,000,000
„ foreign produce ...	900,000	28,000,000
Meat, home produce ...	15,000,000	24,000,000
„ foreign	—	15,000,000

Mr. McHardy remarks on these figures :

'In 1801, if the imported bread-stuffs (for 900,000 persons) had failed, the utilization for human food of inferior qualities, used for other purposes, would have prevented any serious calamity; but now, when 28,000,000 are fed on imported wheat and 15,000,000 on imported meat, an enemy would have no need to land an army in England, but could starve this nation into submission if our Navy is unable to protect

* 'The British Navy for a Hundred Years,' p. 48.

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the ships bringing in these supplies of food. If the people have not confidence in the adequacy of the Navy to protect our food-supplies, what would be the price of the fourpenny loaf within twenty-four hours of the declaration of war? It would spring at once to three or four shillings, and with this rise in the price of food what could be the means of the workmen to pay for it? If the Navy were unable to protect our mercantile fleet, the import of cotton and other raw material for our factories and the export of our manufactured goods would be stopped, the factories closed, and workmen would be without wages to pay for food, even if it were not at famine prices.'

According to Admiral Close (interview in the *Daily Graphic*): 'On the outbreak of war [with us] there must be a panic on the Corn Exchange, the poor man's loaf must go up to famine price, which means bread riots and revolution. The British public and those military authorities who are answerable for the defence and feeding of the army and the nation believe that the Navy will be able to protect the three millions sterling of food which comes to us every week in six hundred ships. Here crops up the ignorance of the public on naval matters.'

‘Well,’ says some opponent of universal military service, ‘all this simply means that we must make our Navy much stronger, in order that it may be able to protect our food-supply in time of war.’ And I heartily agree. But it means much more than that. While we ought to strain every nerve and shrink from no outlay in trying to keep pace with the ship-building activity of the other naval Powers, we are, as a matter of fact, very far from being in the position of superiority to the combined fleets of France and Russia alone which the Royal Commission laid down as necessary for our safety; nor can we hope to secure that superiority at our present rate of building. The burthen laid upon our Navy in the event of war with a European Power in the near future would therefore be so huge that, even as an emergency measure alone, we require a Home-Defence Army with which to meet an attempt at invasion while our fleets are grappling with their thousand duties.

But I have also shown that, however strong our Navy may be, we require a large Army for expeditionary purposes and in order to garrison and police our vast Empire.* And, looking into

* After all the sacrifices that the nation has made in blood and money in the South African War, it would be criminal

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the not very distant future, we may well ask ourselves whether even the gigantic outlay which would be necessary if we were to spend the same 'insurance' money on the Navy now as our forefathers did a hundred years ago would enable us ever again to attain such complete supremacy at sea as we had in 1801. In any case, any increase of the Navy means more men, and makes the question of an adequate Naval Reserve a still more pressing one.* And there is little doubt that the natural march of events must very soon bring home to every Briton the conviction that even *England's* wealth cannot in the long-run buy what the devoted service of the manhood of the nation can alone give—the peace and security of the Empire.

A consideration of the task allotted to the Navy under the next heading will illustrate

folly to keep an insufficient garrison in the newly-conquered territories. We all hope that the time may not be far distant when those who are fighting so bravely on both sides will forget their wounds, and live in amity side by side under the strong and liberal rule that England extends to all her subjects. But it would be wrong to ourselves and to the Boers to have a garrison of less than 50,000 men in South Africa for some years to come.

* Ὡς οὐδέν ἐστιν οὔτε πυργὸς οὔτε ναῦς
ἐρήμος ἀνδρῶν μὴ ξυνοικούντων ἔσω.

SOPHOCLES.

another aspect of the anomalous position which we are forced to adopt by the comparatively insignificant nature of our military resources.

4. The fourth task that our Navy would have to fulfil in time of war is that of protecting our Coaling-Stations. It must seem the utmost presumption on my part to venture to disagree with such an authority as Mr. H. W. Wilson, and I do so with great diffidence. Yet I cannot help thinking that the defence of Coaling-Stations is more properly the function of military* than of naval forces, and I am glad to find that in so thinking I am in agreement with Captain W. H. James, and substantially with Sir Charles Dilke and Mr. Spenser Wilkinson.†

* I include under this term adequate garrisons, forts, and submarine mines and vessels.

† In their work, 'Imperial Defence,' they state, indeed, that 'provision must be made for the various foreign stations' (p. 64). But in discussing the nature of that provision (p. 73) nothing is said about ships. 'It is desirable to insure their communications with Great Britain, as far as possible, by direct telegraph cables, to complete and maintain their stores of ammunition, and, where necessary, of provisions, and, *above all, to provide them permanently with full garrisons.* To delay until the outbreak of war the completion of the garrisons would be to offer them as prizes to an energetic enemy.' This view is fully in accordance with that expressed by Sir Charles Dilke himself in his earlier work, 'Problems of Greater Britain' (1890), where he treats the question of coaling-stations very fully (pp. 512-539).

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In the lecture I have before alluded to on 'The Functions of the Navy and Army in the Maintenance of British Empire,' Captain James says :

'What are the duties of the army? and I include under this head all the land forces of the Empire :

'1. To render it impossible for an enemy to land in England without the certainty of defeat.

'2. To defend India and those colonies which hostile forces might invade.

'3. *To defend our bases of operations all over the world—i.e., coaling-stations and important ports.*

'4. Expeditionary purposes.'

And again (p. 8): 'We have to meet, in the case under consideration [that of an attack by a foreign fleet, accompanied by a small military force, on our coaling-stations or distant ports] two dangers—bombardment, for the sake of destruction; or capture, *in the case of ports which have no military defences.*

'The first we run the risk of; and with regard to the second, plainly, if the like points of attack are defended by forts, which need be neither extensive nor costly, and *if we so organize the population of these places as to make it, in*

all human probability, *certain that any military force the enemy might reasonably be expected to land on such an expedition must be defeated, the reasons for attack would cease to exist.**

It is clear that if our coaling-stations and important colonial ports were provided with good forts, long-range, heavy calibre guns, well-constructed submarine mines, and had *adequate garrisons (which in the case of colonial ports could and should be locally raised)*, they would be safe from attack by hostile squadrons or expeditionary forces. This would relieve the Navy of the burthen of doing what can be better done by land defence, instead of obliging us to anchor a fleet at each of our colonial ports and coaling-stations to meet a possible enemy; in other words, the addition to our military forces which is so urgently needed would at the same time render our Navy far more valuable for offensive purposes than it is at present.

At present our garrisons abroad, except, perhaps, in the case of India, are absurdly inadequate, and many of our coaling-stations would pass into the hands of the enemy at the beginning of a naval war with France and Russia,

* The italics are mine.

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unless we weakened our fleets by detaching small squadrons to guard them.

In his speech on the Army Estimates on March 12, 1900, Mr. Wyndham told us that we had seventy-two battalions of infantry abroad on a normal footing. Of these, fifty-two battalions were in India and three in Egypt. *That leaves seventeen battalions for the protection of all our coaling-stations and naval bases all over the world!* These seventeen battalions were divided as follows :

Gibraltar	...	...	...	3 battalions
Malta	...	...	...	7 „
Mauritius	...	...	...	1 battalion
Halifax	...	...	...	2 battalions
Jamaica	}	between them		1 battalion
Barbados				
St. Lucia				
Ceylon	...	...	...	1 „
Singapore	...	...	...	1 „
Hong Kong	...	...	...	1 „
				<hr/>
				17 battalions

Mr. Wyndham went on to say that 'on June 1 last, instead of seventeen battalions, there were only thirteen and a half at these colonial stations, *because we had to borrow one-fifth*, the reason being that, while South Africa is entitled to two battalions for naval stations, we had at that time six and a half battalions there.'

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And since then we have borrowed 10,000 British troops from India (equal to eleven battalions at least), while the British battalions at Ceylon and Singapore have been replaced by native infantry from India.* When Mr. Wyndham made his speech, we had only *seven battalions* of Regular Troops in the United Kingdom. And at the same time, though a large number of the Militia was embodied, that force was without organized transport or modern artillery ; thirty battalions had left the country for active service or garrison duty, and the best men (those belonging to the Militia Reserve) had been absorbed into the Regular Army. Thus, after being six months at war, during which time we might have become embroiled with any of the foreign Powers, whose sympathies are so completely on the side of the Boers, this country was defended by a handful of Regulars ;† a Militia which had had the backbone taken out of it, and

* Since the above was written, we have withdrawn about 30,000 more troops from India for the Chinese expedition (August, 1900).

† In the April, 1900, number of the *Nineteenth Century* Mr. Arnold-Forster says : 'There are not 5,000 available and properly organized regular troops in the country.' For a masterly examination of the military situation at home during the war, see the same writer's 'The War Office, the Army and the Empire.'

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whose training left much to be desired; and finally the Volunteers, who, with the best will in the world to serve their country, were without organization, transport or modern artillery—in fact, lacking everything necessary to form them into a Field Force capable of offering adequate resistance to an invading army: yet this is precisely the *only raison d'être* of the Militia and the Volunteers.

I think it will be admitted by any impartial reader that I have established my contention that, while the Navy is *absolutely* stronger than ever it was (except in personnel), it is far weaker than it was at the beginning of the century relatively (1) *to the expansion of the Empire and the enormous responsibilities it entails on the navy*; (2) *to the prodigious development of the naval power of other nations*.

I now pass on to the second part of the proposition with which I started, viz., that our national defences are far weaker now than they were a hundred years ago, relatively to the change which has taken place in the attitude of foreign Powers towards us since that time.

We have seen what the military and naval forces of the chief foreign Powers are, and that Mr. Sidney Low, after referring to the latter in

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the article* to which I have several times alluded, said :

‘It is no longer a case of keeping ahead of one or two rivals, but of five, and, looking at the chances and changes of international politics, it cannot be said that a hostile league of three or four, or under certain contingencies the whole five, of these States against us is unthinkable.’

I shall have no difficulty in proving, in the following chapter, that these latter words are no exaggeration, and that, such being the case, we cannot be satisfied with a ‘strong’ Navy only, but must make up our minds to organize the fighting forces of the nation ; nay, of the Empire—and where are better to be found in the wide world?—if we do not want to see this great fabric, built up with so much labour and so much heroism by our forefathers, crumble to ruin at the first shock of war with a European coalition.

‘A thousand years scarce serve to form a State ;
An hour may lay it in the dust.’

BYRON.

* ‘The Military Weakness of England’ (*Nineteenth Century*, January, 1900).

CHAPTER IV

THE ATTITUDE OF FOREIGN POWERS

' . . . In a certain section and class of their [foreign Powers'] subjects . . . there is at the present moment an intense prejudice against Great Britain. . . . We can have no security or confidence in the feelings or the sympathy of other nations ; WE CAN HAVE NO SECURITY EXCEPT IN THE EFFICACY OF OUR OWN DEFENCE AND THE STRENGTH OF OUR OWN RIGHT ARM. Everywhere you see the powers of offence increasing. Armies become larger, navies are founded ; railways, telegraphs—all the apparatus which science has placed at the disposal of war becomes more perfect and more effective. And all these things may, by one of those strange currents that sweep across the ocean of international politics, be united in one great wave, and dash on your shores.'—LORD SALISBURY, at the Primrose League meeting, May 9, 1900.

' *Suppose we are hated, and not so strong.* . . . He [Lord Salisbury] says again we rely on our past history to give us a sense of security. UNHAPPY THE NATION THAT RELIES FOR ITS SECURITY ON ITS PAST HISTORY.'—LORD ROSEBERY, House of Lords, July 27, 1900.

' Never was there so unfriendly a feeling all over Europe towards this country as there is now.'—LORD KIMBERLEY, House of Lords, July 27, 1900.

IN writing on our naval and military resources, I have all along felt the great disadvantage

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under which a layman must necessarily labour in dealing with them, and if I were not profoundly convinced that in advocating Universal Military Service I am fulfilling a patriotic duty to my country, I should have relinquished the task in the hope that some soldier or sailor would at last exchange the sword for the pen, and tell my countrymen what I know is the opinion held by many thoughtful men in both services.

In approaching the question of the attitude of foreign Powers towards us, however, I speak with the knowledge due to personal experience. I have lived for years on the Continent, especially in Germany, Austria, France and Italy; in each case, as also in Switzerland, Belgium and Holland, I have lived among the inhabitants of the country, not merely in English hotels, as the vast majority of travelling—and even *travelled*—Englishmen do. I have always taken the profoundest interest in the relations of one country to another, in the likes and dislikes and the manifold prejudices which one finds in such cases, and from boyhood up I have made it a practice, wherever it was possible, to discuss international relations with Frenchmen, Germans, Italians, Austrians, Dutchmen, Danes and Swiss of every rank and station in society. I have

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thus had ample opportunity of gauging the feelings entertained towards us by most European peoples ; and a careful study of the same subject entitles me at least to a well-grounded opinion on the attitude of those nations with which I have not come in contact, or whose countries I have not visited.

Let us first look back and see with what feelings we were regarded by the chief Continental Powers in the early years of the century.

Taking the period of the Napoleonic wars *as a whole*, we may say that against France and Napoleon's ambition the whole of Europe was arrayed in arms. As a natural result, England, whose ' storm-beaten ships stood between Napoleon and the conquest of the world,' was looked upon with friendly eyes by most of the Continental Powers. Prussia had been our staunch ally since Frederick's time ; and though the vacillation of her King and her geographical position compelled her to remain neutral during a considerable part of the great struggle, and even forced her to accept the disgraceful Treaty of Schönbrunn, she eagerly availed herself of the situation created by Napoleon's retreat from Russia in order to rise against her cruel

11,400,000 IN 1898

1,500,000

IN

1800

THE AREA OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE (IN SQUARE MILES)
IN 1800 AND IN 1898. (*See p. 19.*)

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conqueror ; no nation made greater sacrifices in the cause of freedom, or, it may be added, was so ill rewarded for those sacrifices at the Congress of Vienna. Austria was constantly in alliance with us, and her friendship went back to the time when Marlborough and Eugene fought side by side in the Wars of the Spanish Succession. The Northern Powers, especially Sweden, were our allies,* though Napoleon compelled them for a time to obey the Berlin decree, 'the most stupendous proof of his incapacity as a statesman, and destined to bring about the collapse of his Empire.†

Portugal, the last country that held out against the 'Continental system,' was our firm friend, and Spain, which had at first been forced to lend itself to Napoleon's policy, rose against the insolence and cruelty of her oppressor in 1808. She then looked to us for help and protection, and found it in the Peninsular War.

Russia was at least for a time an active ally, both before and after the Peace of Tilsit. In fact, sentiment and interest alike caused England to be regarded with friendship by every nation

* The Armed Neutrality was of short duration, and was due to England's high-handed action towards neutrals rather than to any hostility on the part of the allied Powers.

† Lodge, 'Modern Europe.'

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that suffered under Napoleon's aggression—and which did not?

In their struggle against the tyrant, the peoples of Europe looked with sympathy and hope to the one nation which, by its command of the seas, was enabled to defy the common enemy and play so prominent a part in freeing them from his domination. England upheld the cause of an oppressed Europe amidst the applause of all nations.

What is the attitude of the chief Powers towards us now?*

It is an undeniable fact that at the present time we are regarded with more or less openly expressed hatred and distrust by nearly every important European Power. The war which we are waging against the Boers has given us a good opportunity of gauging the feelings of foreign nations towards us, and the result has not been flattering—except, perhaps, in the sense of the old German proverb: *Viel Feinde, viel Ehre*. But it may be urged that this is not a fair test, as foreigners have been deceived about the facts of the case, and, perhaps, by the somewhat unfortunate course of the negotiations which

* This chapter was, for the most part, written in the autumn of 1899.

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preceded the war. I am quite willing to grant that there is much truth in this ; indeed, it is the only thing that would explain the pronounced hostility towards us of the Press in such countries as Switzerland, and even Finland, which have hitherto always looked upon England with sympathy and admiration.

But let us not deceive ourselves as to the true state of things. For many years past there has been a growing hostility towards us on the Continent, and I could give many explanations of the feelings that prevail with regard to us besides the *one* with which British vanity is generally pleased to settle the matter, viz., jealousy of our good fortune and commercial prosperity.* But it must suffice here to state facts.

The French hate us far worse than they hate the Germans,† and, though they have given vent to their feelings with more than usual bitterness and indecency during the present war, in revenge

* It is not a little amusing to hear this motive assigned as the cause of even Germany's hostile feelings, while at the same time we are told, and with truth, that Germany is our too successful rival in every market of the world.

† An interesting proof of the truth of this statement—if proof were needed—is to be found in the simple fact that a Franco-German alliance has been more than once discussed lately.

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for Fashoda and our attitude during the Dreyfus case, anyone who has watched their Press for the last ten years at least knows that the one theme of which they never tire is abuse and slander of 'perfid Albion'—'l'ennemi, l'ennemi séculaire depuis Jeanne d'Arc jusqu'aujourd'hui, jusqu'à toujours,' as a recent French writer calls us.

Such is the attitude of France. And nobody can deny that the questions at issue between the two countries are many. There is Egypt, there is Siam, there is Newfoundland; and, while the question of Morocco forms but a small cloud on the political horizon at the present moment, an access of Chauvinism on the part of France, coupled with the belief that the Franco-Russian fleet could successfully meet ours in the Mediterranean, might at any moment render that question acute.

This consideration leads us to examine the attitude of Russia towards us. It was for some time the fashion to doubt the reality of a Franco-Russian alliance, and to regard it as a chimera created by French vanity. At the present moment such a view is out of date; and when we consider the many reasons which render such an alliance advantageous to the two Powers, it

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is astonishing that attempts should have so long been made to throw doubt on its reality. Russia has not forgotten the part we played in the Crimean War ; still less has she forgotten the Treaty of San Stefano, by which we deprived her of the hard-won fruits of her victory over Turkey.*

Our frontiers march together in the East, and there are questions at issue between us in Persia, Afghanistan, and China. The foolish dog-in-the-manger policy by which our statesmen have tried to prevent the largest Continental Power from securing an ice-free port on the Pacific has only served to exasperate Russia, while it has failed to secure that object, as might have been foreseen. If England had pursued a policy of give-and-take with Russia in the Far East, the two great Powers might have existed side by side in friendly rivalry ; as it is, our attitude has unconsciously aided the policy of slow, but sure and aggressive, expansion from within outwards, which Peter the Great left as a legacy to his successors. If we look at the reasons which make for a Franco-Russian alliance, it is not difficult to see that, while France must view with

* The war of which that treaty was the outcome cost Russia £120,000,000 and 100,000 men.

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pleasure an attack by Russia on our land frontier in India, Russia looks to France to render that attack effective by disputing the command of the sea with us, and so preventing us from pouring the reinforcements into India, without which it would be impossible to maintain its defence for long.

Once we make it clear to ourselves that a policy of mutual support is the natural one for France and Russia, we may be prepared to see evidence of it in regions where it would appear that one or other of these Powers had no interest to serve. It is clear that an active propaganda against British influence is being carried on by the Dual Alliance in Abyssinia; and with the recent appointment of a Russian Minister to the Sherifian Court we may expect a rapid development of events in Morocco, since it would be clearly to the advantage of Russia to have her ally established opposite to Gibraltar, a menace to our position in the Mediterranean. While such is the attitude of France and Russia *quâ* Dual Alliance, we have no cause to complain of the behaviour of the Government in either country. Both have observed the strictest neutrality, and there is reason to believe that the Czar has repeatedly expressed himself averse

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to taking advantage of the situation by pushing the Russian advance in Asia. A consideration of what such an advance would involve for us while we have our hands tied in South Africa should make us feel grateful to the Czar for the chivalry or love of peace which inspires his behaviour; but it should surely also make us determined never again to have to depend upon the goodwill of a foreign monarch for that security which our own preparedness can alone properly confer.

Germany has come to look upon English policy as unscrupulous and untrustworthy, and though the German Press does not condescend to such revilings as come natural to the papers of the Boulevards, its tone has been consistently hostile to us since war first loomed in sight; nor has it been friendly for some years past. In this connection no one will be led astray by the German Emperor's exhibition of tactful courtesy in paying a visit to this country at a time when the European chorus was so loud against us. This was a purely personal act, which in no way alters the feelings of Germany towards us; and the German papers did not fail to lay stress upon the Emperor's words to the effect that the country feels 'the bitter

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need of a strong navy,' in order to follow out the policy which would be most acceptable to her.*

There are a hundred reasons why England and Germany should be firm friends. There is the common Teutonic origin, the relationship of language, the same religion, the same integrity of public life, the same love for truth and justice, the same respect for woman, and, on the part of the Germans, a profound admiration for our past history and literature.†

But, unfortunately, with all these reasons for

* Since I wrote these words, in October, 1899, the tone of the German Press with regard to our exercise of the right of search, and the debates in the Reichstag on the Navy Bill, have shown how deep-rooted is the hostility felt towards us in Germany; and Count von Bülow, in supporting that Bill, pointed out that, though the relations between the Governments of the two countries are perfectly satisfactory, the policy of nations is bound to become more and more the result of popular feeling, and less under diplomatic control.

† It is a thousand pities that Englishmen in general are so ignorant of Prussia's great and noble struggle for national freedom under the leadership of Stein and Scharnhorst in the Wars of Liberation. There are few things in the history of other nations better calculated to arouse the sympathetic admiration of Britons than that struggle, which began when Prussia lay crushed under the iron heel of Napoleon after Jena, and ended in the three days' Battle of Leipsic, or, rather, in the splendid help rendered to Wellington at Waterloo by the Prussians under old Blücher.

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a good understanding between the two nations, there has been in the last few years nothing but misunderstanding and irritation.

We have been frequently told of late that there is no reason whatever why England and Germany should quarrel, and that our interests are the same in every part of the globe. Those who write thus evidently act on the old dictum, 'Quæ volumus, credimus libenter.' But while I sincerely wish that such an assertion were true, I believe it to be made without a true appreciation of facts that point quite the other way. I cannot help thinking that those who speak thus forget that, because *we* have everything we wish for and have no quarrel with Germany, that is no reason in itself for concluding that Germany may have no causes of quarrel with us. With regard to the commerce and trade of the world, England and Germany are at present in the relative position of 'Have' and 'Getting'—*i.e.*, while England has a huge preponderance over any nation in the world as a commercial and colonial nation, and her trade is still increasing, Germany's trade and commerce is going up by leaps and bounds; and this, coupled with the rapid increase of her population, is bound sooner or later to make her look for territorial increase

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in the shape of colonies.* It is because she is well aware of these facts, and knows that they will bring her into collision with us, that she is so strenuously bent on increasing her navy.

Fortunately, in considering the attitude of Germany towards us, we must take into account the commanding personality and influence of the German Emperor. There can be no question that his most earnest wish and determination is directed towards the maintenance of European peace, so necessary for the unimpeded development of Germany's commerce and industry. It may sound paradoxical to say so, but there is no more potent factor in favour of the Peace of Europe than the influence of the great War-Lord, the master of many legions. And there can be no doubt that that influence has been

* I believe that the twentieth century will witness the same struggle of the chief European nations in the partition of the South American continent, of which Africa has been the scene during the nineteenth century. It is certain that Germany will play a very prominent part in that struggle, especially as she has vast commercial interests in South America which are fostered by groups of energetic German settlers in nearly every South American State. It is easy to foresee that, if England demands her share of the booty, as she undoubtedly will, collisions are sure to arise; and it may well be that some spot in Brazil or Argentina is destined to see Briton and German meet face to face to decide the supremacy of another continent.

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most powerfully exerted against any attempt at unfriendly intervention in the present war, nor has the German Emperor hesitated to brave the resentment of his people in his determination to show that he, at least, will be no party to a scheme for the humiliation and spoliation of Great Britain. At the same time, it would be sheer cant to pretend that his attitude is to be taken to indicate approval of the war in which we are engaged, or of our policy in general. While there is, no doubt, some real friendliness of feeling towards us, it would be absurd to deny that a sane appreciation of the importance of peace and a clear perception that England's downfall would not improve Germany's position in Europe are at the root of the German Emperor's policy towards us. The interests of both parties require peace, but it must not be supposed that therefore those interests will never clash or that the Emperor's friendship would survive that eventuality.

It is not my purpose in the present work to enter upon a discussion of the policy of isolation pursued by our statesmen of both parties for many years past. That policy may or may not be a wise one, but of its results there can at least be no doubt. He who refuses to promise his

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assistance to anyone under any circumstances may be doing wisely if he is strong enough to stand alone;* but he cannot expect to be regarded as a friend by any of those who would gladly have offered a *quid pro quo* for his friendship, but who have been obliged to enter into other alliances, perhaps distasteful to themselves, in order to secure their safety. He may even have to reckon with a possible combination of such would-be friends with his certain enemies, especially if his wealth, coupled with a doubt as to his ability to defend it, should render such a combination particularly tempting.

Thus, our isolation may be 'splendid,' but it practically means that every nation's hand is against us. Our refusal to strengthen the Triple Alliance, the best guarantee of European peace, by our powerful adhesion (of course,

* Indeed, a policy of absolute isolation and non-interference would, if it were possible—which it is not—imply as its logical corollary the ability to meet any possible combination of Powers on land or sea. As a matter of fact, as guarantors of the independence of Belgium and as constant upholders of the integrity of Turkey, we have shown that neither in theory nor in practice do we adhere to that isolation of which we boast so much. And it is this very want of a well-defined and clearly-stated policy which makes it so difficult for any of the other Great Powers to regard us with any feelings but those of mistrust and suspicion.

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purely on *defensive* lines), threw the brunt of keeping that peace on the shoulders of Germany, and tempted France and Russia (essentially the aggressive factors in the European situation) to form that Dual Alliance which has since become a much more serious menace to *us* than to the Triple Alliance, which it was nominally intended to oppose.

Then, as if we were determined that Germany should cease to look to us as a natural ally, we refused the invitation to take part in the arrangements which the three Great Powers made at the Treaty of Shimoneseki in order to secure their interests in the Far East, and so forced Germany into a quasi-alliance with France and Russia.* And what did that abstention, which was greeted with such jubilation by the Press of both parties, do for us? It has entirely destroyed British prestige in China, has by no means earned us the friendship of Japan, which we were told would follow, and has drawn Germany into closer relations with France and Russia. The German Emperor has turned this

* It is interesting to note how completely the Eastern Triple Alliance, inaugurated at that time, has again manifested itself in the present Chinese crisis. When will Englishmen grasp the fact that the fulcrum of German policy is friendship with Russia?

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latter circumstance to such good account by his tactful diplomacy that a distinct *rapprochement* has taken place between France and Germany, while the idea of the *revanche* loses strength in the former country year by year as the memory of 1870-71 grows fainter.

Such being the situation, it is not surprising that Professor Mommsen should regard a Russo-Franco-German coalition against Great Britain as a natural and, in his eyes, very desirable event.

The Austrian press has shown itself extremely hostile to us during the present war; but it would be difficult to find any real causes of conflict between us. In any case, it is probable that, in the event of the Emperor's death, Austria will have such problems to grapple with in trying to keep together the ill-assorted fragments that form the Austro-Hungarian Empire that she will have little time to devote to manifestations of Anglophobia.

The difficulties which lie before Austria in the near future form a further factor tending to increase the friendliness of Germany with France and Russia; for Austria's weakness during the troubles that must ensue when the Emperor's influence is removed will weaken the Triple Alliance, and so make Germany more than ever

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anxious to maintain friendly relations with her neighbours on the east and the west.*

Italy, at least, has shown herself friendly on the whole, though a considerable portion of her Press has been, and is, persistently Anglophobe. There can be no doubt that the vast majority of Italians regard this country with affectionate admiration and with a warm recollection of the sympathetic attitude of England towards the cause of Italian unity and the *risorgimento*. But, unfortunately, Italy is not strong enough to move with us against France and Russia, even supposing the other members of the Triple Alliance offered no objection to her doing so. The position of Italy in the Mediterranean in case of failure would leave her so utterly at the mercy of the Dual Alliance that she might well hesitate to cast in her lot with us if we were attacked. Besides, as I have already pointed out in dealing with her navy, Italy is gradually losing ground as a naval Power, and,

* At the same time, it is interesting to note that Germany has made her preparations for war with France and Russia in such a way that they are complete without the assistance of either Austria or Italy.

A distinguished Prussian officer, who has himself been through the campaigns of 1866 and 1870-71, made this very clear to me in a conversation I had with him two years ago.

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with the state of her finances, cannot hope to keep pace with the naval development of the richer nations.

Spain dislikes us for our active manifestation of sympathy with the United States in the late war, and has not forgotten Lord Salisbury's allusion to 'a dying nation'; while Portugal still smarts under the recollection of the ultimatum that settled our quarrel in East Africa.* It is particularly a matter for regret that this war should have changed the warm friendship by which Holland has been actuated towards us into feelings of hostility. This was of course inevitable, and we cannot be surprised that the people of Holland sympathize strongly with the Dutch or quasi-Dutch Boers. The unfortunate part of the whole thing is that England's loss is here Germany's gain.† A distinct *rapprochement* has taken place between Holland and the latter country, and we may have to take into

* Happily, since the above was written, the old alliance between the two nations has been revived, to their mutual advantage and satisfaction.

† When I was in Holland in 1894, the Dutch friend with whom I was staying told me to talk French or English in society, but on no account to speak German, as the Germans were cordially disliked. I am afraid that a German guest would now be similarly warned against speaking English with his Dutch hosts.

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consideration 'the possibility of a close alliance between Germany and Holland, which would open the ports of the latter country to the war-like navy of the former, and bring us once again face to face with a great naval Power having its bases on the Texel and the Scheldt.' Finally, keeping to Europe still in our general survey, we hear hostile voices even from Switzerland and from Finland, which have hitherto always looked to England as the home of liberty and constitutional government, but which have been deceived as to the real causes of our quarrel with the Boers by the active propaganda of the Leydist press.*

One cannot help being amused at the sympathy displayed for us in this war by Turkey. For it is not difficult to see that Turkish sympathy for us rests on precisely the same complete misapprehension of our true motives which causes the antipathy of Switzerland—viz., the idea that we are strong tyrants beating down a rebellious people, fighting for their national independence, an idea that must be as displeasing to freedom-loving Switzerland as it is pleasing to the nation that is accustomed to a 'despotism

* M. Naville's admirable and impartial work on the causes of the war will, it is to be hoped, in time put an end to the misconception that prevails in Switzerland on the subject.

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tempered by assassination' and seasoned with an occasional massacre of the Christian population.

Very different is the appreciation of Greece. That country, which has so often seen Englishmen bleed for its national liberty, which remembers an English poet's death in its cause, which received the Ionian Isles as a free gift from this people, and which has recently felt the might of England exerted in behalf of her fellow-countrymen in Crete—that country is perhaps the only one in Europe that fully appreciates the motives of the British people in the war with the Transvaal. The Greek people knows that the nation which gives so full a measure of liberty to its subjects all over the globe, which has even allowed a Dutch majority in Cape Colony to swamp the British-born population, and actually return a Dutch Ministry to power, and which has ever championed the cause of down-trodden nationalities, entered upon the war with the sole purpose of securing what a narrow and corrupt oligarchy in a semi-dependent State refused—fair and equal treatment and reasonable franchise for *all* white men.

There remains to be considered the disposition of the United States and of Japan. The latter is, at best, neutral, and more likely to prove a

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rival than a friend in the Far East—unless, indeed, she should solicit our aid against Russia. In that case English statesmen would doubtless long hesitate before they would commit this country to an alliance with a yellow race against the white ; such a course would, apart from more far-reaching results, be hailed with a cry of execration by the whole civilized world.) ? 1906

The question of the attitude of the United States towards this country is one with which it is not easy to deal. There is, besides the actual difficulty of gauging American feeling from the utterances of the Press, the extraordinary hesitation which the English people show in crediting the possibility of any real ill-will being felt towards us by ‘our cousins over the water.’ Nor is such hesitation surprising when we consider what has been the behaviour of the English people in their dealings with the United States during the last few years. I believe there are few things of which the British nation has more reason to be proud than the noble self-control displayed, under gross provocation, by Government, Press, and People alike over the Venezuela question in 1896.*

* Writing in 1897, Mr. R. B. Marston said : ‘If our reply had equalled our provocation, we should now be in the death-

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Yet, when the Spanish-American War broke out, John Bull, with his customary generosity, forgot past injuries, and only remembered that an Anglo-Saxon nation was fighting to give freedom and good government to a cruelly oppressed people; and there can be little doubt that the chief European Powers would have intervened in favour of Spain had they not known that between them and such intervention stood Great Britain and the British Fleet. Small wonder that Englishmen, remembering these things, expected to find in the United States at least a friendly comprehension of the reasons that compelled us to go to war with the Transvaal. It is not too much to say that these hopes have been disappointed, and that, though there are no doubt many individual Americans who understand us, and are therefore friendly, the vast majority, failing to understand us, are enthusiastically pro-Boer.*

struggle with our kinsmen. . . . No one who watched the outburst of war fever, expressed and excited rather than controlled by the majority of the American papers, can doubt what the result would have been if our people and press had replied in the fashion we did to Germany'—on the occasion of the German Emperor's telegram ('War, Famine, and our Food-supply').

* American statesmen have repeatedly declared that there

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Unfortunately, the people of the United States appear still to labour under the extraordinary delusion that our attitude both in the Venezuela affair and during the Spanish-American War was dictated, not by noble self-control in the one case nor by generous sympathy with a worthy cause in the other, but by a feeling that they were stronger than we. Strange as such a theory must appear to those who know the relative strengths of the British and American Navies, and who are at the same time aware of the extraordinary kindliness of sentiment felt in this country towards America, it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that it is one firmly believed in by a very large, influential, and noisy section in the United States; and I doubt whether there can be any reciprocal cordiality of

can be no alliance between us; and since I wrote the above the United States, as well as Germany, have hastened to repudiate any idea of the new Triple Alliance suggested by Mr. Chamberlain. (It is significant, too, that the first hint of a protest against the landing of British troops at Shanghai should have come from an American quarter, while the cordial co-operation of the United States in our action in the Far East, which was prophesied with such confidence by the Press, has vanished into thin air.) As this book is going through the press, the news of the abrogation of the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty comes as another indication of the feelings entertained by the American people towards this country.

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feeling between the two great branches of the Anglo-Saxon race until the Americans disabuse their minds of an idea which does as little credit to their perspicuity as it does justice to us. There is surely nothing more worthy of the best efforts of the enlightened men of both nations than the promotion of a cordial understanding between England and America. How splendid it would be if, on a basis of mutual respect and of common striving after the ideals of Freedom and Truth, the whole of the Anglo-Saxon race, numbering as it does some 140,000,000, were to stand shoulder to shoulder in the forefront of the nations of the earth !

That would indeed be 'a consummation devoutly to be wished.' Let us welcome every sign that makes for such a desirable end, let us do everything in our power to further it; but do not let us pretend that it is a *fait accompli* before there is a better basis for it than exists at present.

SUMMARY

I HAVE shown in the preceding pages—

I. That our national defences are far weaker now than they were a hundred years ago, whether we consider them in relation to the vast expansion of our territory, population, trade, and sea-borne commerce, on the one hand; to the prodigious increase in foreign armaments, naval as well as military, on the other; or, finally, to the hostile attitude of the majority of the European Powers towards us.

II. That the argument that a strong Navy is all-sufficient for our needs will not stand, in view of—

1. The many claims which our foreign continental possessions make on our military resources.

2. The need that must inevitably arise in a great war to back up the action of our fleets by offensive military operations.

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3. The necessity of having a well-organized and efficient Home Army as a second line of defence against an attempt to invade these islands.

III. That, even if the above argument were valid, we cannot, owing to the increase of so many foreign navies, with the greatest financial sacrifices, hope to secure for the British Navy a position of such complete supremacy on the ocean as we possessed at the beginning of the century, and which alone would justify the view that a strong Navy is sufficient for our needs.

Glancing over the surface of the globe, we find that we cannot reckon on a single available friend among the nations of the earth. With our vast Empire stretching across every part of the inhabitable world, with our enormous trade and commerce, with our precarious food-supply, we are open to attack nearly everywhere, and everywhere there are jealous rivals and probable foes watching for an opportunity, either singly or in alliance, to snatch from us some of that wealth which we have acquired with such labour, and which we guard so ill. How long will Englishmen go on believing that we can hold one-fourth of the earth's surface and one-fifth of its population with an Army equal in numbers

to that of Spain? The time has come for us to consider whether we Britons will make the same sacrifice for this glorious Empire of ours which is made by the inhabitants of every European nation, not only by Great Powers like Germany, France, and Russia, but by Belgium, Holland, Servia, Bulgaria, and Montenegro—the sacrifice of personal military service for Home Defence.

I think it will be admitted that the considerations I have advanced are sufficient to show that we must very greatly increase the military forces at our disposal if we wish to secure our safety and hand down unimpaired to our descendants the glorious inheritance we have received from our forefathers.

In the following pages I propose to show that voluntary enlistment cannot supply the forces necessary, and that we must adopt the system of Universal Military Service, *not for garrison duty or ordinary service abroad*, but for securing an adequate Home-Defence Army, which would also form a reserve only to be called on for active service abroad in case of grave national emergency.

Part II

The Justice and Necessity of Compulsory Service for Home Defence

CHAPTER I

THE JUSTICE OF COMPULSORY SERVICE FOR HOME DEFENCE

'Home defence is a duty for all who are capable of fulfilling that duty.' *'Nicht stehendes Heer sondern Volkswehr.'*—AUGUST BEBEL, the German Socialist leader. (The italics are his own.)

BEFORE proceeding to show the right of the State to require the armed service of every able-bodied man in defence of the country, it will be well to say a few words on the *injustice* of the present system. It is all the more necessary to clear the ground in this way, since the most extraordinary self-deception prevails on the subject among the public at large—a self-deception fostered by the flattery of politicians and nourished by the unpatriotic selfishness which it

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serves to hide, or, rather, which it raises into a virtue. The British public is accustomed to hear, with a vague feeling of honest pride, that 'conscription'* is 'repugnant to the feelings of the nation,' and that it cannot be tolerated 'in a country where the sentiment of individual freedom and conscience is as highly developed as here.†

The tone in which these grandiloquent phrases are generally uttered would lead one to suppose that the nation were being complimented on refusing to consider, even for a moment, some base and disgraceful course of action, especially as they are frequently accompanied by an expression of pitying contempt for those poor Continental nations which languish under the tyrannical slavery of manhood service to their country. I doubt whether national vanity has ever led a people so far astray as to make a boast of that which is rather a subject for regret. The fact is, there is a strange con-

* Since this term has come to be very generally, though incorrectly, employed for Universal Military Service, I wish to state clearly that, whenever I use the word, I mean by it the compulsory service for a certain limited time of all able-bodied citizens for Home Defence, without ballot, substitution or dotation.

† Lord Derby, speech delivered at Liverpool in 1871.

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fusion of thought behind this self-righteous denunciation of 'conscription' as opposed to 'voluntary' service. We are the only European nation which recruits its whole army on a system of 'voluntary' enlistment; hence we are apt to conclude that the men of other nations are less patriotic, as *they are compelled* to serve their country.*

It is high time that we should see this matter in its true light. Putting aside preconceived notions on the subject, is it not juster, fairer, and more honourable that a nation should take the burthen of its defence upon its shoulders *as a nation*, rather than shift that burthen on to the backs of those who are compelled by circumstances to bear it? Let us look at it from another point of view. There is assuredly nothing more glorious, nothing more splendid, than the patriotism of those men who come forward at great personal loss, inconvenience,

* As a matter of fact, over 20,000 men voluntarily enlist annually in the French and German armies; and the German army on a war footing includes 340,000 men who have done three or four years' voluntary service—that is, more than twice as many as the whole of our Home Army. It may be added that this is voluntary service in the strictest sense of the word, since the pay is merely nominal—1½d. a day. The above number does not include the one-year Volunteers, of whom about 8,000 pass through the ranks every year.

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and risk to serve their country, whether in the Regulars, the Militia, the Yeomanry, or the Volunteers; more particularly does this apply to those Militia battalions and 11,000 Volunteers who have gone to the front in the present war. But I must absolutely decline to go into ecstasies over the patriotism of the *nation* on that account.

Because some thousands of men do infinitely more than their duty, am I to indulge in rhapsodies over the millions whose patriotism is confined to cheering vociferously and singing 'The Soldiers of the Queen'? Our boast would be questionable enough if our system were in very truth as 'voluntary' as it pretends to be. But is it really voluntary in the case of the average recruit in the Regular Army? Does he as a rule freely choose the Army as a career when other occupations are open to him? 'The times are serious,' wrote Professor Cairnes* (how much more serious now!); 'let us purge our souls of cant. What does this system of "voluntary" recruiting, which we are asked to believe is the only system suited to our highly-

* 'A National or a Standing Army?' in 'Political Essays,' by J. E. Cairnes, Emeritus Professor of Political Economy, University College, London, pp. 232, 233, 1875.

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developed political and moral feelings, mean? Simply this, that people who have sufficient means, instead of being required to pay their just debt to their country, in their own persons, are allowed to hire others, who have little choice but to accept this offer, to expose their persons on their behalf. No less lofty principle than this, it seems, can satisfy the highly-developed conscience of the English people. The moral fastidiousness displayed is only surpassed in China, where, it is said, men may procure substitutes for the gallows. . . . Well, all this may be highly convenient ; but, in the name of common decency, let us cease to put it forward as a national distinction to be proud of—a practice entitling us to look down, as from a lofty height, on the nations who expect each capable citizen to bear his share in his own and his country's defence.'

The testimony of recruiting officers, Army Medical officers, and the Army Returns alike shows clearly enough that there is very little choice in the case of the vast majority of those who enter the Army.

'We draw our soldiers from the poor ; and who are the poor? Those who, under the inexorable law of natural selection, fail, from



£37,500,000 in 1800.



£116,000,000 in 1898.

THE NATIONAL REVENUE IN 1800 AND IN 1898.
(See p. 19.)

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some physical, moral, or intellectual defect, in industrial pursuits.*

‘It is poverty makes men soldiers,’ said Defoe, ‘and drives crowds into armies; and the difficulty to get Englishmen to list is because they live in plenty and ease; and he that can earn 20 shillings a week, at any easy, steady employment, must be drunk or mad when he lists for a soldier, to be knocked o’ the head for 3s. 6d. a week.’

‘Want and hunger are, unfortunately for us, the invisible recruiting sergeants of a great proportion of our army.’†

I shall have more to say later on the subject of the physical quality of the men we get under the system of voluntary recruiting, but I think I have said enough to show that the system is

* Captain H. W. Hime, R.A., F.S.S., in his essay, ‘Universal Conscription: the Only Answer to the Recruiting Question.’ This essay, written in 1875, obtained the Gold Medal of the Royal United Service Institution. It is the only full examination of the question of obligatory military service that I have come across, and gives an admirable survey of one aspect of the question, viz., its necessity. (An excellent pamphlet has, however, just appeared, entitled ‘A Strong Army in a Free State,’ by G. G. Coulton. Mr. Coulton advocates the Swiss system of compulsory military service.)

† Lieutenant-Colonel C. M. Douglas, V.C., M.D., ‘The Recruit from a Depot Medical Officer’s Point of View’ (paper read at the R. U. S. Institution, March, 1899).

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in itself unfair, as throwing the whole burthen of national defence on the shoulders of a few, and that, as a matter of fact, the term 'voluntary' is very misleading as a description of the motives which induce the great majority of men to enlist.

But while the voluntary system as applied to our Army *as a whole* is unfair, our foreign service Army cannot be recruited in any other way. For it is obvious that we cannot demand garrison service abroad of the conscript citizen. The 'normal foreign garrisons . . . must be furnished from this country, and must be voluntarily recruited. This is not a condition peculiar to Great Britain, since *no Power employs conscript troops in distant and tropical stations*.* France recruits her Algerian army corps mainly in Europe; but the distance is short, and the climatic conditions of Algeria differ little from those of the Var. The French colonial forces in Cochin China, Tong King, Madagascar, Martinique, and West Africa are made up of volunteers from the regular army or of disciplinary battalions. German colonial troops are also volunteers attracted by pay and other advantages. Thus, the governing condition that

* The italics are mine.

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our foreign garrisons must be composed of men voluntarily recruited is special only in the sense that the proportion of our troops serving abroad is immensely greater than in the case of any other army.*

‘What!’ cries a critic, ‘you say that the voluntary system is unjust, and at the same time you acknowledge that our foreign service army must be a voluntary one!’ I admit the apparent inconsistency; but it is apparent only. For one thing, there is no arguing against the inevitable. It would be *impossible to compel* the citizens of any State to do garrison duty in distant and unhealthy climates; if foreign possessions could only be held by submitting to such an intolerable burthen, the nation would no doubt prefer to relinquish them.

We *must*, therefore, recruit our foreign service Army by voluntary enlistment. But by recognising the duty of every citizen to give his services freely for *Home Defence* with a merely nominal remuneration, *as the men of every other European nation do*, we can afford to make the conditions of voluntary service abroad favourable enough to obtain all the men we want of the

* ‘The Proper Precautions for Imperial Safety’ (Sir G. S. Clarke, *Nineteenth Century*, April, 1900).

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best quality possible, and on terms that would really repay them for engaging in what we may compare to one of the 'dangerous trades.'

It is not my intention here to deal fully with the technical details of the conditions under which we would recruit the foreign service Army. But I would venture to suggest the following points in this connection :

1. Increased pay, say 1s. 4d. a day as the *minimum* pay to the ordinary infantry private, without any deduction.*

2. A pension of a shilling a day after twenty-one years' service, of which the first three would be spent at home,† the next seven abroad (these ten in the Active Army), while the remaining

* It is admitted on all hands that in any case it will be impossible to make any considerable addition to our present forces on the voluntary system without a great increase of pay. The Duke of Bedford spoke of an increase by sixpences and shillings (speech in House of Lords), and Colonel J. C. B. Stopford reckons that 50,000 more men would mean the addition of about £8,500,000 to the Army Estimates ('The Volunteers,' *Nineteenth Century*, January, 1900).

† This would insure men not being sent out to tropical climates until they have completed their twenty-first year; the term might even be extended to four years, in which case men would enter on their seven years' foreign service after having completed their twenty-second year. Of course, the service in the Militia Reserve would be for ten years under these conditions.

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eleven would be spent in the Militia Reserve—*i.e.*, with no further duties of training and service than the German Landwehr.

3. Preference to be given to the 'professional' soldier of good character in the police, in all small Civil Service appointments (door-keepers, porters, etc.), in the Post-Office, and on the railways.*

4. Soldiers of good character who had completed their term of active service would naturally provide additional non-commissioned officers for the training of the short-service Home-Defence Army. While giving acceptable and remunerative employment to the foreign service soldier, this arrangement would easily solve the great difficulty of a short-service Army, that of providing the necessary backbone of highly-trained non-commissioned officers with a high sense of discipline, duty, and responsibility.†

* In this latter case, the country would have to depend upon the enlightened patriotism of the railway companies; I may remark that all this is done on the Continent with excellent results.

† Of course, as in the French and German armies, the non-commissioned officers would be largely drawn from the thousands of volunteers who would enter the Home Army with the intention of adopting a military career; we should also, no doubt, have schools for the training of the non-commissioned officers from boyhood.

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I need hardly say that I make these suggestions with great diffidence and with no pretence of offering a full solution of the difficulties ; my whole purpose in this book being, indeed, to urge a great *principle*, I confidently leave the application of it to experts in the details of organization. I believe, however, that under some such conditions as I have here indicated we should obtain a long-service Army for garrison and ' police ' duty abroad, which would be unrivalled in quality. Needless to say, we could and should then raise the physical standard which has been so frequently and deplorably lowered of late, to that which the strain of service in a hot climate demands, and would therefore save immensely both in lives and money. While we recognise the necessity of voluntary recruiting in the case of the foreign service Army, we can, therefore, at least make it worth while for the strong and adventurous element in the population to undertake this service, instead of taking the poor, undersized boys who are at present forced into the Army by a conscription of the most cruel kind, since it is not only partial, but falls most heavily on those who by the misfortunes of their condition are least able to bear it.

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I repeat, it would be both unjust and impossible to compel the conscript soldier to serve one or two years on garrison duty abroad.* But the case is very different with Home Defence. The only just, as well as the only adequate, solution of the problem of Home Defence lies in the exercise of the undoubted right of the Sovereign or the State to call upon every citizen to bear arms in defence of his country—in other words, in the adoption of Universal Military Service. The right alluded to is not only founded on nature and reason; it has been recognised again and again by the great legal authorities of this country, and clearly affirmed by prominent statesmen and others; and it is the *constitutional basis of our system of national defence*: for the Militia Ballot Act, as it now stands on the Statute-book, shows that *the existing law is that of universal personal service for Home Defence*.

The right of the State to demand the personal service of every able-bodied citizen in defence of

* I insist on this point at the risk of wearying the reader, because I am convinced that the greatest part of the prejudice which exists against Universal Military Service may be traced to the absolutely erroneous notion that men would be asked to expatriate themselves for two or three years for garrison duty in a distant and unhealthy land.

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the country is founded on nature and reason. It is obviously the first duty of a citizen to defend his country ; to refuse or shirk that duty is to place in jeopardy that independent national existence which is the necessary condition of the free and happy development of the community. ' The very existence of a nation as an organized community is founded upon the recognition of duties obligatory upon all, and which the State may at need enforce.'* If we inquire what these duties are, the answer may be found in the following words of Mill's ' Essay on Liberty,' a work ' advocating so great an extension of individual liberty ' that it has been thought by some to be a plea for ' revolution and anarchy :† ' Everyone who receives the protection of society owes a return for the benefit, and the fact of living in society renders it indispensable that each should be bound to observe a certain line of conduct towards the rest. This conduct consists, first, in not injuring the interests of one another . . . and, secondly, in each person bearing his share (to be fixed on some equitable principle) of the labours and sacrifices incurred in defending the society or its members from

* ' Political Essays,' p. 230, Professor J. E. Cairnes.

† Captain Hime's essay.

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injury or molestation. These conditions society is justified in enforcing, at all costs, to those who endeavour to withhold fulfilment.*

In accordance with this fundamental principle, we find that in the earliest times every citizen was a soldier ; and it was only when a nation had obtained security by its readiness for defence that industrial progress became possible. As this progress increased, those who profited by it gradually managed to shift the burthen of military service on to the shoulders of the professional soldier, who was very highly paid. But the principle that the citizen owed personal service to his country was never quite lost sight of, least of all, strange to say, in England ; for here the national jealousy and fear of the unconstitutional use of the Standing Army led to a constant assertion of the importance and advantages of the Militia, as being the constitutional force, depending ultimately, as I have said, upon the recognition of the obligation incumbent upon all men to serve the Sovereign in defence of the realm.

Meanwhile, as the industrial 'struggle for existence' became more acute, and the stakes at issue for each country more valuable, it was

* Mill's 'Essay on Liberty,' p. 44, People's Edition.

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seen that the nations must revert to the first principle of manhood service, submitting to that tax as the *only safe insurance* against the loss of the fruits of industry by an unsuccessful war.

We alone have thought that we could escape this natural law, on account of our insular position, and the maritime supremacy which, in a manner, resulted from it. Indeed, before the days of steam, and while we possessed the absolute command of the sea which we had in the early part of the century, it really seemed as if we could enjoy the unique privilege which Englishmen seem to look upon as their indefeasible right—that of ‘having our cake and eating it’; it really seemed as if we could expand, conquer, colonize and annex new territories everywhere, and yet remain free from the responsibilities which such acquisitions entailed, viz., the need for their defence. But with the shrinkage of the English Channel, brought about by the advent of steam, the growth of foreign fleets and armies, the enormous increase in our wealth, and the dislike with which we are regarded by most foreign Powers, we can no longer refuse to recognise the possibility of invasion. It is unnecessary to discuss here the various theories as to how an invasion could take

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place. Suffice it to say that the possibility is now clearly recognised by all competent writers on National Defence ; and the whole *raison d'être* of the Militia and the Volunteers is to meet an attempt at invasion. This task they would have had to fulfil practically alone any time during April, May and June of 1900, for, if we except the 23,000 veteran soldiers of the Royal Reserve battalions,* the few Regular Troops remaining in the United Kingdom consisted chiefly of raw recruits, really boys of eighteen and under, together with men in hospital or otherwise unfit for active service in South Africa. This leads me to say a few words with regard to the training received by our Auxiliary Forces. I beg the reader to remember that they are essentially intended to meet the picked troops of the highly-trained modern armies of other European Powers, led by officers formed in the best schools of modern tactics and strategy. It is very important to bear this fact in mind, because the public is naturally apt to take a very lenient view of what should be expected of the Volunteers, remembering that they are men who,

* Who are not, however, even *now* (end of August) fully armed and equipped, much less *trained* in the use of the new rifle.

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with very little encouragement from the powers that be, patriotically give a great deal of their time and labour in order to fit themselves to fight in defence of their country. I yield to no one in my respect and admiration for the public spirit with which our Auxiliary Forces are imbued, and the remarks I have to make are intended in no carping spirit of criticism; they are simply statements of fact.

‘Service in the Militia is for six years. . . . The annual training does not exceed twenty-seven days.’*

The force is steadily decreasing in numbers;† it is totally unprovided with transport or modern guns; its officers are mostly birds of passage on their way to the Regular Army, while those who remain have the mortification of seeing their

* ‘The Armies of the World,’ C. S. Jerram.

† On February 20, 1900, the Marquis of Lansdowne, while admitting that the Militia is far below its Establishment, went on to console his hearers by remarking: ‘*But it has been more or less below its Establishment for many years past. We are not worse off in that respect than we were last year or the year before.*’ How consoling, how comforting to an anxious nation! Truly, the very ‘balm of Gilead’! But it is not even true. We *are* worse off than last year and the year before. For not only is the Establishment *lower*, but the discrepancy between the Effectives and the Establishment is *larger* every year.

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best men (the Militia Reservists) withdrawn from the ranks precisely when they are most wanted there, viz., when a big war involves the calling out of the Reserves and the embodying of the Militia.

The time of training is so absurdly inadequate that it is not surprising to learn that the shooting is very unsatisfactory. The Annual Report on Musketry for 1898 says that 'in such matters as judging distance, fire direction, fire control, and fire discipline, they seem twenty years behind the times.' Yet we have lately been told by the Commander-in-Chief (Lord Wolseley) that soldiers who cannot shoot are 'frauds.'*

The Yeomanry Cavalry training is for *eight days* annually, and they are required to fire 'not less (!) than thirty-five rounds of ball-cartridge a year.'†

* This is what Mr. Walter Long, an experienced yeomanry officer and a member of the present Government, says of the Yeomanry: 'There are only two courses open to this force: One is, that they should be made more efficient than they are at the present time; and the other is that they should be abolished' ('Our Home Army,' p. 76, H. O. Arnold-Forster).

† Since I wrote the above, the scathing criticisms of General Sir Montgomery Moore and Lord Wolseley on the results achieved after *three months'* training by the troops—Regulars and Militia—at Aldershot, make it unnecessary for the layman to say any more on the subject of *Militia* training.

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The Volunteers are without transport, quick-firing guns, or commissariat ; a large number of them are unable to take part in the week's training in camp, which is the only opportunity they have of learning combined operations of the three arms or of practising musketry under conditions similar to those of war. Under the pressure of the present war, the Government wished the Volunteers, for the year 1900 only, to undergo a month's training in camp, which with intelligent men of the class who form the majority of Volunteers would no doubt have added enormously to their value and efficiency. But there was such a storm of protest at this proposal both from employers and employés that the Government has had to content itself with offering special terms to induce 50 per cent. of the men in the Volunteer battalions to train for a fortnight in camp. I hope it will not be inferred that I think the Volunteers were to blame in not falling in with the original proposal. Quite the contrary. The absurdity of demanding such self-sacrifice on the part of those who already do so much, while their fellow-citizens do *nothing*, is just one other aspect of the injustice that underlies our boasted voluntary system. Feeling this as strongly as I do, I can

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only admire the patriotism of the Volunteers in behaving as they have done in spite of neglect with which they have consistently been treated in the past. I am simply concerned to point out that the training they get, as a whole, is totally inadequate to produce efficient modern soldiers. *Individual* Volunteers may be splendid shots and far more efficient at every military duty than many a Militiaman, but 'it is not possible to insure that all trained Volunteers shall go through, even once a year, the exercises necessary to make them really efficient soldiers.'*

The fact is that as a nation we dearly love makeshifts, and cling to the idea that we can 'have our cake and eat it.' Thus, we think we can achieve the same great end as other nations, namely, *national security*, without making any sacrifice; or if there *must* be sacrifice, then let it be vicarious and ineffectual.

With regard to the legal recognition of the right of the Sovereign to demand armed service of all, the following quotations from Clode's 'Military Forces of the Crown' will suffice. In defending Hampden's refusal to pay ship-money, Mr. St. John admitted certain positions in favour of the Crown to be too clear for

* Hazell's Annual, 1900, article 'Volunteers.'

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controversy. Thus, 'it must needs be granted . . . that as the care and provision of the law of England extends in the first place to foreign defence,* and (*sic*) secondly *lays the burden upon all.*'† If it be argued that this only means that all must contribute to the common defence by money-payment, I answer that this payment is in itself a recognition of and commutation for the duty of service, which may nevertheless be required when the public welfare demands. *Salus populi suprema lex.* At any rate, there is no ambiguity about the following: 'When Charles I. ascended the throne, the law recognised the obligation of every citizen to bear arms, either in the county force or in the trained band of his town or city.'‡

And again: 'By an early statute§ every freeman between the ages of fifteen and sixty years was obliged to be provided with armour to preserve the peace.'||

'In the 11 Henry VII., c. 18, the duty of every subject was stated to be to serve and assist his sovereign at all seasons where need shall require.'¶

* That is, defence against invasion.

† Clode, 'Military Forces of the Crown,' vol. i., p. 4.

‡ *Ibid.*, vol. i., p. 16. § The Statute of Winchester, 1285.

|| Clode, vol. i., p. 31. ¶ *Ibid.*, vol. i., p. 350.

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In 1757 the Militia Ballot Act was passed, establishing a militia force 'to be raised by ballot only—the principle of voluntary service being ignored.' I propose to return to the subject of the Militia Ballot, which has excited so much attention during the present war, when I deal with the various methods which have from time to time been employed to supply the deficiencies in our ever-incomplete military Establishments.

I shall conclude this chapter by citing a few of the many important declarations made by prominent statesmen and others on the general principle of obligatory service for Home Defence.

In his speech on the Training Bill, June 24, 1806, Lord Castlereagh referred to the Levy-en-Masse Bill in these words: 'The principle of that Bill rested on the undoubted prerogative of the Crown to call upon the services of all liege subjects in case of invasion; and the only power that was added by that Bill, was the power of organizing and training those men who were subject to this exercise of prerogative; so that, in case of invasion, the prerogative might be effectually exerted for the defence of the country.'*

* Cobett's 'Parliamentary Debates,' vol. vii., p. 818.

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In 1807 Lord Sidmouth asserted 'the right of the State to demand military service of all or any members of the community for the purpose of domestic defence.'

In 1867 Lord Dalhousie said: 'I am certain that any Government bold enough to put the compulsory system into operation in place of the voluntary system would find itself supported by the voice of the country and the Press.'

In 1870 Colonel Anson, V.C., M.P., said 'he advocated the Prussian principle,* which was that the State had a right to call upon every man to defend the country. . . . He believed that the State had a right to the services of its people, and that it had no right more sacred than that of calling upon the people at large to defend their country.'

Similar declarations have been made by Lord Longford in 1867, by Sir James Scarlett in 1870, and by Lord Blythswood and Lord Wemyss in 1900. The latter wrote in June of this year: 'One line, and one line only, leads to complete national safety, and that is compulsory service for home defence.'

* We have seen that the principle is one founded on *ancient English law*, though it has been left to Prussia to put it into complete and successful practice.

CHAPTER II

THE NECESSITY FOR COMPULSORY SERVICE FOR HOME DEFENCE

Salus populi suprema lex.

IN order to show that we must at last, like every other European nation, adopt Universal Military Service to supply our military needs in an adequate and efficient manner, it will be necessary to examine the results of the voluntary system of recruiting. If it can be proved that this system has failed in the past, and is bound, from the nature of the case, to fail in the future, I think it will be admitted that the necessity for manhood service has been established.

I. *The voluntary system has always failed to supply the requisite numbers, except in times of reduction.*

It is to be observed at the outset that, while in theory the soldier enlists for certain wages which, with his keep, clothing, etc., are reckoned

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to be at least equal to those of a common labourer, whenever there has been urgent need of men, recourse was had to a bounty system.*

Thus, 'from 1715 to 1867 it was found necessary, from time to time, to offer a bounty, in order to induce men to enroll themselves in our Voluntary Army. In 1745 the bounty for the Guards was £6. . . . In 1775 the bounty was £3, and militia volunteers for the Line received £6 in 1802. The bounty for the ordinary recruit in 1803 was £16. In 1855 the bounty was £8 for the infantry, £9 for the marines, and £10 for the artillery. Bounties continued to be given, at varying rates, until 1867, when they were abolished; but I have no hesitation in saying that, with our present system of recruiting, it would be necessary to revive them if we become involved in a great war.'†

This prediction has been fully verified during the present war, bounties having reached the highest figure known, viz., £22 offered to the men of the Reserve Battalions, who are only engaged to serve for this one year, be it

* Or, as we shall see later, the physical standard was lowered.

† Captain Hime, 'Universal Conscription: the Only Answer to the Recruiting Question.'

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remembered : 30,000 of these came forward out of 50,000 expected by the Government ; nearly 10,000 were rejected on medical inspection. A bounty of £10 is offered to recruits for the Militia.

But even high bounties have often failed to secure the necessary number of men. . On November 8, 1775, at the outbreak of the American War of Independence, the Minister of War stated, in the House of Commons, ' that all his exertions had failed in recruiting the army to its requisite strength. . . . The bounty had been raised, the standard lowered,* and attempts had been made to *enlist even Roman Catholics* and to incorporate foreigners singly into the British regiments, but all had failed in the expected effect.†

In 1806 a similar recruiting crisis occurred. ' Throughout the whole war great difficulty had been experienced in providing a proper supply of soldiers ;‡ the hulks were drained, and the prisons emptied more than once, to supply the want of recruits.§ The bounty rose in 1804 to £16 16s., but all these measures failed ; the

* History repeats itself, and with the same results.

† Marshall's 'Military Miscellany,' p. 48.

‡ Alison's 'History of Europe,' vi. 105.

§ Dupin's 'Military Force of Great Britain,'

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effectives were 25,000 below the establishment in 1806, and in that year Parliament was again called upon to decide 'how we are to insure to this country, what unquestionably it has never had, a never-failing and adequate supply of regular soldiers.'*

In 1859 the Royal Commissioners on Recruiting said: 'Although authority was given nearly three years ago, in consequence of the mutiny in India, to raise an additional number of 65,000 men, and although, in order to facilitate that operation, *the bounty was increased, and the standard*—as is unavoidable when so many men are required—*was lowered to such an extent as to bring boys instead of men into the ranks*, the establishment of the army is not quite complete.'

I have already mentioned that in 1805 the deficiency in the Regular Army amounted to 25,000 ;† in 1806 it was the same ; in 1814 it was 32,314 below its establishment ; 7,949 in 1826 ; 7,643 in 1831 ; 9,280 in 1871 ;‡ in 1898 the Regular Army was 13,531 short of its

* Mr. Windham's speech in the House of Commons, 1806, in Alison.

† According to another return, 49,000.

‡ These figures are from Captain Hime's essay.

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establishment (the number wanting to complete the Army and the Auxiliary Forces was 75,090).

In the *Nineteenth Century* for April, 1900, Sir G. S. Clarke writes: 'The establishment strength of our multifarious military bodies is never reached. The principle has always failed in peace; it has now failed in war, as the following figures show :

	Effectives.	Normal Establishment.	Deficiency.
Militia	105,122	132,952	27,830
Yeomanry	10,114	11,907	1,793
Volunteer	230,785	265,061	34,276
Total auxiliary forces	346,021	409,920	63,899
Grand total all forces	677,314	783,541	106,227

Months of a popular war have not, therefore, sufficed to make up a deficiency of 63,899 in the auxiliary forces alone.* The above figures give a deficiency of 42,328 in the Regular Army, but it probably does not amount to more than 20,000 'since large recent augmentations of the Regular Army have not had time to take effect.' With regard to these augmentations, however, Sir George Clarke adds: 'Unless the attractions of the Army are greatly increased, the large additions sanctioned will never be made, and

* 'The Proper Precautions for Imperial Safety' (*Nineteenth Century*, April, 1900).

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recruiting, *now abnormal*, will fall back to an average which never sufficed to fill an establishment far less than that contemplated.' The truth of this remark is apparent from the Annual Report of the Inspector-General of Recruiting for 1898. From this it appears that the total net gain to the Army by recruiting during the five years 1894-1898, inclusive, only amounted to 11,510, while during the same period there was a net loss of 1,551 to the Army Reserve and 9,683 to the Militia. Taking the year 1898 alone,* the net 'increase' of the Regular Army was 9,980, of which number 4,479 were *Reservists who rejoined the colours*; at the same time, there was a decrease of 3,207 in the Army Reserve, and of 1,884 in the Militia.

II. *The Voluntary System has generally failed to supply sufficient men fit for the duties of war.*

Great Britain is the only first-class Power† which recruits its Army largely from immature boys of eighteen, the age of service beginning after the completion of the twentieth year in most other countries. Let us see what competent medical opinion says on the subject of the employment of these boys.

* After the lowering of the physical standard in 1897.

† Indeed, the *only* Power.

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In the discussion that followed Captain Hime's essay in 1875, Sir Lintorn Simmons* said he assumed that 'boys under twenty-one years of age ought to be excluded, in considering the effective fighting strength of an Army.' In support of this view, he quoted the following words from a lecture given at the Royal United Service Institution by Dr. Leith Adams, F.R.S.: 'It is not only pernicious to the interests of the service, but also cruel, to expect a lad in his teens to do the work of a full-grown man. I speak emphatically on the matter, from the consciousness that the evil consequences of overwork, though apparent to the surgeon, are not sufficiently estimated by many military men.' Sir Lintorn Simmons repudiated the latter statement, but said that it was '*impossible for officers carrying on the duties of the Army . . . to draw that distinction in their duties which Dr. Leith Adams would appear to desire between young men and old men.*' This remark has an important bearing on the quotation he proceeded to give from Professor Parkes's 'Military Hygiene:': 'If the State will recognise the immaturity of the recruit of eighteen, and will proportion his training and his work to his

* Now Field-Marshal Sir Lintorn Simmons.

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growth, and will abstain from considering him fit fully for the *heavy duties of peace* and for the emergencies of war until he is at least twenty years of age, then it would seem that it is not only not a loss, but a great gain, to enlist men early.' Sir Lintorn Simmons's next remark is significant: 'I think, if we have soldiers in the service who, in the estimation of the highest medical authorities, are not even fit for the heavy duties of peace, we cannot call them efficient soldiers for war.' I could give many such quotations, but let it suffice here to indicate what has been the result of the system in the past.

During the Crimean War, when Lord Raglan was told that there were 2,000 recruits ready to send to him, he replied 'that those last sent were so young and unformed that they fell victims to disease, and were swept away like flies; he preferred to wait.' Sir John Burgoyne described the reinforcements sent out as 'a vast number of recruits,' and said he would prefer a handful of real men to this mass of immature boys. It was the same with the reinforcements sent out in the Indian Mutiny. 'During the Indian Mutiny I remember reading of men who were sent out and were at once put into hospital,

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and out of a detachment perhaps of seventy, one-third would come back never having done a day's real soldiering.*

The tendency is towards a continuous increase in the number of young recruits. In 1873 the number of the infantry at home was 53,465. Of these, 15,220 were under twenty-one and over forty—*i.e.*, about 28 per cent.† In 1898 the number of the infantry at home was 62,830; of these, 29,044 were under twenty-one and over forty (latter only 392)‡—*i.e.*, about 46 per cent.

Out of 40,701, the total number of recruits who joined the Regular Army in 1898, 27,642 were under twenty years of age—*i.e.*, none of these would be considered fit for service in any of the *Continental* armies; moreover, 19,104 were under nineteen, and 1,530 under seventeen—*i.e.*, 37 per 1,000.§

The General Annual Return for 1898 shows the rate of increase of men under nineteen and twenty respectively 'serving on January 1 in each year from 1880 to 1899' to be as follows :

* General Sir William Codrington, speaking as chairman at the discussion on Captain Hime's essay.

† Sir Lintorn Simmons, in the discussion referred to.

‡ General Annual Return for 1898.

§ In 1871 18.1 per 1,000 were under seventeen years of age, so that the ratio had been more than doubled in 1898.

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			Ratio per Thousand.	
			Under Nineteen.	Under Twenty.
1880	46	100
1890	70	147
1898	74	153
1899	...	...	76	167

Unfortunately, not only are we more and more compelled to enlist boys rather than men, but the physical standard of the recruit has been lowered until it is at present lower, as far as I can ascertain, than it has ever been in the history of the British Army.

In 1708 'no man under 5 feet 5 inches was to be received into Her Majesty's service.'* In 1872 the Standard was the same, 5 feet 5 inches for infantry. I do not know how often or to what extent this standard was lowered till 1883, but in that year authority was given to enlist recruits between 5 feet 3 inches and 5 feet 4 inches in height. In 1897 the Standard of height for Infantry of the Line was reduced to 5 feet 3 inches for Infantry, 5 feet 2½ inches for Army Service Corps, and 5 feet 2 inches for Drivers in the Artillery.

The same lowering of the Standard has taken place with regard to chest measurement and weight.

* Clode's 'Military Forces of the Crown.'

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Before 1883 the minimum chest measurement was 34 inches. It has now been lowered to 33 inches, but a considerable number are annually enlisted even below that standard, and the ratio of such 'special' enlistments per 1,000 was 18 in 1880, 19 in 1890, 21 in 1898, and 23 in 1899.*

The General Annual Return for 1898 shows the ratio of chest measurements under and over 37 inches, of men 'serving on January 1 in each year from 1880 to 1899,' to have been as follows :

			Ratio per Thousand.	
			Under 37 inches.	Over 37 inches.
1880	...	...	562	438
1890	...	...	657	343
1898	...	...	677	323
1899	...	...	678	322†

In the Militia worse conditions prevail.

In January, 1898, 'the minimum standard of chest measurement for growing boys from seventeen to eighteen years of age was fixed at $32\frac{1}{2}$ inches in all branches of the Militia service, *except in the Infantry*, for which the standard is $31\frac{1}{2}$ inches.†

* General Annual Return for 1898.

† It is only fair to state that in the four years 1892-1895 the ratio under 37 was higher and the ratio over 37 lower than in 1899.

‡ Annual Report of the Inspector-General of Recruiting for 1898.

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The standard of weight, 115 pounds (8 stone 3 pounds), is a deplorably low one for (*presumably*) healthy youths of eighteen. But many are annually enlisted even below that minimum.

Curiously enough, the General Annual Return does not give a comparative statement of the weights 'of men serving.' But I find that 10,693 recruits joined the Regular Army in 1898 weighing under 120 pounds—*i.e.*, under 8 stone 8 pounds—and this gives a ratio per 1,000 of 269; the corresponding figures for 1871 and 1872 (taken from Captain Hime's lecture, Table G) were 159·4 and 171·4 respectively.

Moreover, 18,268 recruits joined in 1898 weighing under 8 stone 13 pounds, and 25,017 out of 40,701 weighing under 9 stone 4 pounds. *Probably the whole of these 25,017—that is, much more than half the total number of recruits who joined in 1898—would have been rejected as unfit for military service in Germany.* This is the conclusion one must arrive at from the following facts stated by Mr. Gattie in his article in the *Fortnightly Review* of April, 1890. He says that, while the average weight of British recruits finally approved for service is only 9 stone 0·2 pound, their average height being 5 feet

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5·8 inches, 'the German recruits examined by Dr. Felzer in 1877, with an average height of 5 feet 5·75 inches, had an average weight of no less than 10 stone 3·3 pounds, and Dr. Felzer suggested that, save in cases of exceptional fitness in other respects, *men weighing less than 9 stone 6½ pounds should not be admitted into the German Army at all*, a restriction which, if adopted in this country, would exclude considerably more than half the men now being accepted for service.'

Taking the percentage of recruits 'specially' enlisted *under* the phenomenally low physical standard that prevails, we find that—

In 1894 it was	25·4
„ 1895 „	19·9
„ 1896 „	18·0
„ 1897 „	29·0
„ 1898 „	33·8*

though the standard had been again lowered in 1897 (Report of Inspector-General of Recruiting for 1898).

I will not weary the reader by quoting more figures. I think I have said enough to show that Dr. Leith Adams was completely justified in saying in 1875: 'We have been compelled

* In 1899 it was 34·3; in other words, *more than a third of the men enlisted in that year were confessedly unfit for service.* The actual number so enlisted was 13,788.

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more or less to select our soldiers from among a class of the population notorious for containing elements of physical degeneracy.

‘The *physique* of our infantry is not at present up to the standard of our race; and I cannot conceal from myself the feeling that, unless remedial measures are adopted, *it will sink lower and lower.*’*

This prediction has been literally fulfilled. Lieutenant-Colonel C. M. Douglas, V.C., M.D. (Hon. Brigade Surgeon), in a lecture delivered at the R.U.S. Institution in March, 1899, said the great majority of recruits enlisted in the North of England and Scotland ‘were sallow, downcast, nondescript youths, mostly artisans; within his own remembrance, the old recruiting-sergeants would have laughed at the recruits of to-day.’

In the discussion, November 12, 1897, at the R.U.S. Institution, on the Military Prize Essay of that year, Colonel Graves (commanding 83rd Regimental District) said: ‘Whenever an addition is to be made to our Army, we are compelled to go below the ordinary standard of physical capacity which has been recognised as

* ‘The Recruiting Question’ (*Journal of the R.U.S. Institution*, vol. xviii., No. 76, p. 64).

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necessary for soldiers. We have got to take the knock-kneed, bottle-shouldered, and miserable weeds out of the gutter.*

I beg the reader to remember that these are the conditions under which the boasted recent increase (small as it is) in the number of recruits has taken place. It is only when we realize the physical type of the average British recruit that we can fully appreciate the splendid behaviour of these men in the field. I do not mean to say that the immature boys of eighteen and nineteen, who form so large a percentage of our army, are sent out on active service: they are not. For though reckoned in the total of our 'effective' (!) Army, the authorities know well enough that they are *ineffective, not fit for 'the heavy duties of peace,'* much less for those of war.† But a very large percentage of those

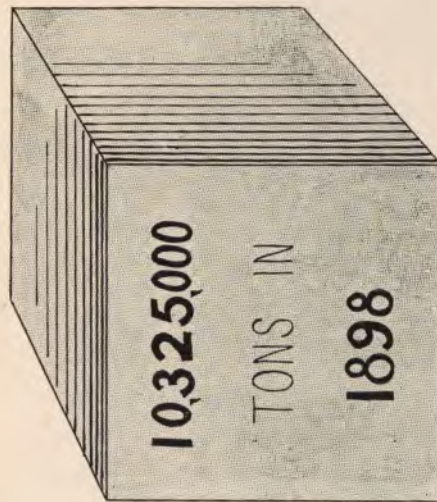
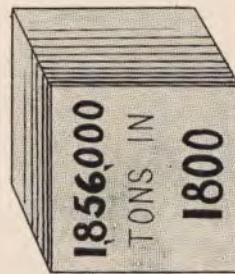
* As it is, considerably more than 1 in 3 have to be rejected because they do not even come up to the present low standard. In 1884 the number of rejections on 64,853 recruits amounted to 42·8 per cent. ; in 1898, after the *lowering of the standard* in 1897, the rejections still amounted to 35·1 per cent.

† Writing to the *Morning Post* in 1884, the late Sir Edward Sullivan said: 'Our recruits are notoriously so young, so immature, so puny, that often a couple of years' careful feeding and nursing are absolutely necessary to enable them to bear the ordinary fatigue and exposures of a soldier's life in time of peace.'

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who go out to fight their country's battles are only just out of their teens, and their constitutions, poor perhaps by heredity, have been weakened by a life under miserable conditions, physical and moral, before they entered the Army as boys of eighteen or less. No words of mine are adequate to do justice to the admirable way in which these men have behaved throughout the war. Heat and cold, hunger and thirst, wounds and death, and—*worst of all—disease*, they have borne with a cheerful heroism which the '*average citizen*' soldiers of other nations could hardly equal. Yes, 'the men are splendid,' as Sir Redvers Buller said, and the nation is justly proud of them. But has it ever occurred to the people of Great Britain that they are in a great degree responsible for a considerable part of the suffering so bravely borne by Tommy Atkins? To my mind, by far the saddest part of the sad business of this war has been the long lists of casualties from disease. It is too early* to know what have been the losses from death in battle, wounds, and disease during the present war, and it will no doubt be some years before we get the final statement of the total number of deaths

* I am writing at the beginning of July, 1900.



THE NOMINAL TONNAGE OF BRITISH SHIPPING (INCLUDING COLONIAL VESSELS)
IN 1800 AND IN 1898. (*See p. 19.*)

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directly due to disease acquired during the war. But it already seems abundantly clear that an enormous proportion of the total casualties have been due to *disease*, and this in spite of the fact that no war has ever been carried on under such admirable medical arrangements, or with such anxious care on the part of the Commander-in-Chief for the welfare of the soldiers.

The latest Return of the total British casualties up to June 30, 1900, gives the following figures :

		Officers.	N.C.O.'s and Men.
Killed in action	...	254	2,403
Died of wounds	...	70	610
Died of disease	...	133	4,204
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Total deaths	...	457	7,217
Sent home as invalids	...	844	18,433*

Compare these figures with those for the last great European war—the Franco - German, 1870-71 :

Killed in action	...	...	17,255
Died of wounds	...	...	10,506
Died of disease	...	...	15,340
			<hr/>
Total deaths...	...	...	43,101†

* Exclusive of sick and wounded men in the British hospitals in South Africa.

† 'Sanitäts-Bericht über die Deutschen Heere,' 1870-71.

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Comparing these two sets of figures, we get the following results :

Percentage of Deaths due to Disease on Total Number of Deaths :

Franco-Prussian War	...	...	...	35.5
South African War (up to June 30)	...	...	...	56.5*

Percentage of Deaths due to Disease on Number of Deaths which occurred out of Action :

Franco-Prussian War	...	...	...	59.3
South African War (up to June 30)	...	...	...	86.4†

A great allowance must of course be made for the prevalence of enteric fever and dysentery in South Africa, where the *climate* is, however, very healthy ; but this will not account for the great disparity between the figures, especially when we remember the frightful severity of the winter of 1870-71, and the rapidity with which the German infantry was marched in the early stages of the war.

But it was the *average German man*, called to arms after the completion of his twentieth year, who had to battle with the hardships and vicissitudes of a terrible campaign ; whereas it is an Army of men drawn *mainly* from the pro-

Published officially 1886. Quoted by Mr. Charles S. Jerram ('The Armies of the World').

* The Returns up to September 22 give a percentage of 59.6.

† The Returns up to September 22 give a percentage of 86.7.

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letariat, with a boyhood and early manhood too often spent in the slums of our great cities,* and a constitution undermined by foul air and bad food—it is an Army largely made up of such elements as these that has had to face, not only the enemy's bullets (this they do easily in virtue of their national character), but short rations and long marches, fierce heat and bitter cold, enteric and dysentery. Does any reader doubt for a moment that the deaths due to disease would have been far less if these conditions had been met by a foreign-service Army with a high physical standard, reinforced by drafts of healthy 'average citizen' soldiers? There has just been a great outcry at the 'revelations' of mismanagement in certain hospitals in South Africa. It seems probable that the greater part of the suffering undergone was really inevitable and part and parcel of that terrible business of war, which does not 'come home' to the bosom of the average civilian. Sympathy with such suffering is all very well, indignation at the inefficiency of the means of alleviation right and

* Out of rather more than 11,000 recruits who wished to enlist in Manchester in 1899, 8,000 had to be rejected on medical inspection; while of the 3,000 who were not rejected only 1,000 could be put into the Regular Army, 2,000 being placed in the Militia.

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proper ; but it seems to me that it would be a little more sensible, a little more *honest*, if we recognised that such suffering is the inevitable concomitant of war, and that the injustice lies in exposing one section of the community, *and that which is least fit for it,** to bear the full brunt of the burden which should be borne by all. Let us be clear about one thing : whatever be the amount of disease and death, which is not inevitable, but due to the poor constitutions of our soldiers, *that* is the price *they* pay for the glorious voluntary system we love to boast of.

III. *The Voluntary System is enormously costly, and must become ever more so.*

In closing the discussion† on Captain Hime's Prize Essay in 1875, the chairman, General Sir William Codrington, said that all the seventy-nine essays which had competed for the Gold Medal agreed in one point, that 'we do not get the man that is efficient for our purpose. *Now,*

* The average strength of European troops serving at home and abroad in 1898 was 202,166 warrant-officers, non-commissioned officers, and men. The total number of admissions to hospital was 198,513, representing a ratio of 981·9 *per thousand!* Moreover, 59·44 per 1,000 were 'constantly non-effective through sickness'; in other words, *over 12,016 of our soldiers were absolutely useless to their country in that year!* (Report of the Army Medical Department for 1898.)

† At the R.U.S. Institution.

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if we do not get the man that is most serviceable for our purpose,' he added, 'we get a most expensive article.'

What was true in 1875 is true now. Indeed, matters are a good deal worse. For, while the quality of the recruit is, on the whole, deteriorating, his price is steadily increasing.

A study of Army Expenditure throughout the century shows a constant tendency towards increase in the cost of the soldier. Leaving out of account the votes for the Auxiliary Forces, we find that the cost per man was £53 6s. in 1810 ; £68 10s. in 1830 ; £79 in 1853-54 ; £90 in 1859-60 ; £100 in 1874-75 ; and £113 12s. in 1897-98.*

It might perhaps be thought that the great increase in the cost of the Army has been due to the increased cost of *matériel*, but Captain Himet clearly shows that this is not the case. The votes for *matériel* ' may vary, perhaps, from one-

* The total *expenditure* on the Regular Army in 1897-98 was £18,026,224 ; the *Estimates* for the same year were £16,638,334. Of course, the increase indicated by the above figures was not a continuous one ; some intermediate years show a considerable fall in cost after an exceptionally high rise. But the *tendency* to a constant and continued rise is clearly undeniable.

† ' Universal Conscription : the Only Answer to the Recruiting Question.'

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seventh to one-tenth of the total Estimates ; but whatever be the range of their variation, the loss or gain on these votes is far too small to affect seriously the total amount of the Estimates. . . .

‘The cost of the *personnel* has been steadily increasing since the introduction of standing armies.’

And why ? The increased cost of *personnel* is due to the fact that the wages of labour have been for a long time slowly but steadily rising, and there can be no reasonable doubt that they will continue to rise. Hence, as the Government is obliged to compete for recruits in the open labour-market, the price of the soldier is bound to go on increasing till the burthen of supporting a voluntary Army large enough for our needs must become intolerable. ‘Our entire revenue applied exclusively to military purposes would not suffice for the drain ; and we might as well be crushed at once by the enemy as ruined by the slow torture of the tax-gatherer.’*

At the same time, the rise in the standard of living which always accompanies the rise of wages will constantly add to the attractions of civil life, so that the residue of the labouring

* ‘Political Essays,’ Professor Cairnes.

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classes who accept 'voluntary' service must inevitably tend to be of lower quality physically, intellectually and morally.

Let us now compare the cost of our Army with that of the chief Continental Powers, for it is only by so doing that we can realize the enormous price we pay for our 'voluntary' soldier. I beg the reader to bear in mind, while following these figures, that we pay our high price *for men drawn mainly from the proletariat*, while the other nations pay *for the services of their average citizens* with the *physique*, intelligence and *morale* that belong to the *nation*, not to a *class*, and that the poorest and most unfortunate in the whole community. It is, of course, very difficult to arrive at a method of comparison which will satisfy all critics. All I can do here is to state clearly the method I have adopted, merely adding that it is the only one, so far as I can see, which can give us *true*, as distinguished from *paper*, results.

It may be well to begin by showing the cost of the British soldier, calculating it on four different methods. We may—

1. Divide the total net Estimates by the *Establishment* of the Regular Army + the Staff of the Auxiliary Forces.

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This gives $\frac{£20,413,817^*}{178,177} = \text{nearly } £115 \text{ per man.}$

This is a *paper* result, since many thousands of the men voted were never obtained.

2. Divide the total Estimates by the *Effectives* of the Regular Army + the Staff of the Auxiliary Forces.

This gives $\frac{£20,413,817}{164,646} = \text{about } £123 \text{ per man.}$

This is a *real* result, since the divisor is the number of men who were actually obtained.

3. Divide the total Estimates by the *Effectives* of the Regular Army + one-eighth of the Militia attending training + one-thirtieth of the Volunteer and Yeomanry *Efficients*.

This gives $\frac{£20,413,817}{177,859} = \text{about } £114 \text{ per man.}$

* The figures are throughout for the year 1898-99, that being the latest for which all the information is available. It is, perhaps, hardly necessary to remind the reader that the British and native troops in India are paid for out of Indian funds, and do not therefore enter into the present calculation. The cost of the troops in India is at least £17,000,000 a year. The net Estimates are obtained by deducting the Appropriations in Aid from the gross Estimates.

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This was the basis adopted by Captain J. C. Ardagh* in his lecture on 'The Comparative Cost of the Armies of Different Nations and the Loss to a Country by Conscription.†

Captain Ardagh's idea was to take 'the number of men kept continually under arms as a divisor.' On this I must remark that it is a great stretch of the imagination to look upon any part of the Auxiliary Forces as being 'kept continually under arms.' Moreover, if this basis were adopted, it would be necessary to calculate what part of the Reserves of foreign armies are to be regarded as 'continually under arms.' This would obviously be impossible, and Captain Ardagh did not attempt to arrive at any such estimate. I must regard this method of comparison, therefore, as both fallacious with regard to our own forces and impossible of application to those of other nations.

4. Divide the total Estimates by the prospective War Strength, reckoning 'the number of efficiently trained men who could be produced on sudden mobilization.' This would include all the Effectives of the Regular Army, the Re-

* Now Major-General Sir John Ardagh.

† Delivered at the R.U.S. Institution, March 31, 1876, General Sir Lintorn Simmons in the chair.

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serves, the Militia, and one-fourth of the enrolled Volunteers and Yeomanry.*

This gives $\frac{£20,413,817}{413,405†} = \text{about } £49 \text{ per man.}$

This was the other basis of calculation employed by Captain Ardagh, and I have adopted it myself in calculating the cost per man of the Army on its ultimate war strength. While, however, Captain Ardagh included one-fourth of the enrolled Volunteers and Yeomanry as efficiently trained men, he entirely excluded the whole of the German Landsturm (over 3,000,000 men), the French Armée Territoriale and its Reserve (over 2,250,000 men), the Russian Cossacks, etc. Seeing that a very large number of these men have gone through their full term of military service, and are in the prime of life, I think I am fully justified in including one-sixth of them in the total war strength. Many will think that at least one-third ought to be

* Though one ought, perhaps, only to include such Volunteers and Yeomanry as have been returned as efficient.

† Made up thus :

Effectives, Regular Army	...	...	157,863
„ Army Reserve	...	...	78,839
„ Militia (including staff)	116,582
„ Enrolled Volunteers and Yeomanry	60,221
			<hr/>
			413,405

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included, but I prefer to take a very low and safe estimate. Adopting, then, Systems 2 and 4 as a basis, we get the following result :

Germany :

$$\text{Peace } \frac{£30,410,000}{593,400^*} = \text{about } £51 \text{ 4s. per man.}$$

$$\text{War } \frac{£30,410,000}{3,513,000^\dagger} = \text{about } £8 \text{ 10s. per man.}$$

France :

$$\text{Peace } \frac{£25,600,000}{550,000} = \text{about } £46 \text{ per man.}$$

$$\text{War } \frac{£25,600,000}{3,000,000^\ddagger} = \text{about } £8 \text{ 10s. per man.}$$

Russia :

$$\text{Peace } \frac{£30,560,000}{896,000} = \text{about } £34 \text{ 2s. per man.}$$

$$\text{War } \frac{£30,560,000}{3,500,000} = \text{about } £8 \text{ 14s. per man.}^\S$$

Austria-Hungary :

$$\text{Peace } \frac{£12,000,000}{358,000} = \text{about } £33 \text{ 15s. per man.}$$

$$\text{War } \frac{£12,000,000}{1,870,000} = \text{about } £6 \text{ 8s. per man.}$$

* Peace Strength as given in the 'Statesman's Year-Book' for 1899, including 8,000 one-year Volunteers. The mark is reckoned on the basis of 20 marks = £1.

† This is about 250,000 less than the War Strength given in the 'Vedette' (*vide* p. 28), and includes only one-sixth of the Landsturm.

‡ Reckoning one-sixth of the Armée Territoriale and its Reserves.

§ Reckoning 9.45 roubles = £1. I have taken the lowest estimate of the Peace and War Strength as given in the 'Statesman's Year-Book,' 1899.

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Italy :

$$\text{Peace } \frac{\text{£}10,530,000}{237,500} = \text{about } \text{£}44 \text{ per man.}$$

$$\text{War } \frac{\text{£}10,530,000}{1,630,000^*} = \text{about } \text{£}7 \text{ per man.}$$

I give these results in tabular form :

Cost per Man of the Chief Armies of the World.

	Peace Footing.			War Footing.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
United Kingdom ...	123	0	0	49	0	0
Germany ...	51	4	0	8	10	0
France ...	46	0	0	8	10	0
Russia ...	34	2	0	8	14	0
Austria-Hungary ...	33	15	0	6	8	0
Italy ...	44	0	0	7	0	0

Needless to say, not much importance can be attached to the *prospective* cost per man on a war footing. The real cost per man in time of war will depend almost entirely upon the actual preparedness for war in time of peace. When clothes, ammunition, guns, stores, transport, and horses have to be procured under the actual stress of necessity and at topmost speed, the Government will naturally have to pay enormously more for them than if they had been held in readiness in time of peace; and there is the additional drawback that these things, obtained in a hurry, will probably not be of satisfactory quality. The experience of the

* Reckoning only one-sixth of the Territorial Militia in the war strength.

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present war was hardly necessary to prove the truth of such an obvious fact. It is probable, therefore, that even the great disparity shown in the second column of the above table does not fully represent the difference between the prospective price paid per man by us and that paid by a nation like Germany, prepared for the eventuality of war down to the smallest detail.*

Confining our attention to the cost per man on a Peace Footing, we find that we pay more than twice as much per man (even taking Method 1 as the basis of calculation) as Germany, France, and Russia, and three times as much as Austria and Italy. I shall deal fully later on with the common objection that the countries having obligatory military service really pay much more for their army than we do, because their men are withdrawn from productive employment for a certain period during which they would be earning wages, and so adding to the wealth of the country.

* It is, perhaps, not generally known that the German Government keeps enormous stores of coal at all the chief railway-stations for use in time of war. These stores are constantly renewed by the purchase of coal when the price is low, the quality and quantity in store being periodically inspected by Government officials.

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I will only remark here that we must, in strictness, consider the annual charge per head for our National Debt* (12s. 5d.) as a further addition to the already enormous and ever-increasing cost of the soldier. The annual charge on the German National Debt amounts to only 1s. 4½d. per head of the population.

IV. *Expedients to avert Failure.*—We have seen that, in spite of our enormous Army Expenditure, it has never been possible to obtain the forces voted by Parliament, and that, whenever there has been a special need for larger numbers, the favourite methods for procuring them were to offer large bounties and to reduce the physical standard below that 'which has been recognised as necessary for soldiers.' But even these methods often failed, as they have failed during the present war.†

It is interesting to note what was done by the Government under these circumstances. They resorted to two expedients :

1. The employment of Foreign Mercenaries.
2. The application of *limited conscription*.

* £634,000,000 incurred in the prosecution of our *successful* wars. What would it be after an *unsuccessful* war? The German National Debt is £113,000,000.

† See p. 137.

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1. I have already* alluded to the fact that the employment of foreign mercenaries for supplying the deficiencies of our Army is out of the question for the future, having regard to the attitude of other nations on the subject; I shall therefore not detain the reader with a historical account of this matter. Suffice it to say that foreign troops were largely employed by the British Government at various periods from the Revolution (1688) down to the Crimean War, the last occasion on which such troops were used by us. In 1813 nearly 54,000 foreign mercenaries were serving in our Army; and Clode says that the numbers we employed from 1804 to 1813 were small as compared with those engaged by us in earlier wars. He adds: 'Our Continental Wars were, I apprehend, usually fought with Foreign rather than with Native (*i.e.*, British) Troops.'[†]

2. The other expedient for filling up the ranks of our Army was *impressment*, and, later, *the application of limited conscription*.

In feudal times the obligation to military service rested upon all,[‡] 'in addition to which

* See p. 21.

† Clode's 'Military Forces of the Crown,' vol. ii., p. 435.

‡ As Lord Wemyss well said, speaking in support of the Militia Ballot Bill in the House of Lords on July 1, 1900:

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obligation the military tenures laid upon those who were land-owners more specific duties to aid the King in his wars, either with personal service or the means of subsisting an Army.*

In Charles I.'s reign, impressment was the usual mode of recruiting, though this was a violation of the law, which only allowed impressment *in the case of sailors*.†

In 1640 Parliament passed an Impressment Act to raise an army in Ireland; and an Act passed in Philip and Mary's reign recognised the authority of the Crown to impress soldiers 'to serve in the wars, or otherwise, in defence of the realm,' while the 35 Elizabeth, c. 4, made provision for the invalid soldiers who had been

'It was a conscript army that won the glorious victories of Crecy and Poitiers, and conscription was the system by which our armies were raised in our early history.' Mr. Coulton, in *'A Strong Army in a Free State'* (pp. 8-11), gives an admirably clear account of the old English system of compulsory military service.

* Clode's *'Military Forces of the Crown,'* vol. i., p. 17.

† The press-gang continued to be the regular and orthodox way of recruiting for the Navy till as late as the nineteenth century. 'For service in the Navy such a power has in modern times been adjudged to be constitutional' (Clode's *'Military Forces of the Crown,'* vol. i., p. 355). Just as Waterloo was won by the Militia battalions raised by the ballot, so Trafalgar and all our great naval victories were won by sailors largely recruited by the press-gang.

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‘pressed for Her Majesty’s service’ in the fight with the Spanish Armada.*

Coming to measures taken in later times, Clode notes at the outset ‘that the great principle of supply throughout the last century was that of *conscription limited to the Criminal and Pauper classes*.’†

‘It is a stern fact that limited conscription was resorted to on almost every occasion on which troops were required from 1695 to 1781.’‡

It was limited to imprisoned debtors from 1695 to 1702. It was applied to criminals in 1702, and it was extended to paupers in 1703.§

With regard to the conscription of criminals, Clode says: ‘The exact number of this class admitted into the Army during the Peninsular War is not easily traceable. *Three Regiments—one of military distinction—were thus formed, and others were recruited.*’

The Act of 1708 is described as one ‘to stimulate voluntary enlistment under the apprehension of impressment.’ But the Act of 1756 ‘was one of impressment only, not embracing voluntary offers of service.’||

* Clode, vol. i., pp. 352, 353. † *Ibid.*, vol. ii., p. 10.

‡ ‘Universal Conscription,’ etc., Captain Hime.

§ Clode, vol. i., pp. 11-16.

|| It is interesting to note that under the first of these Acts

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Finally, under the provisions of the Act of 1778 smugglers and men deserting their families were to be impressed, while a reward of ten shillings was given to anyone discovering a fit man for impressment !

Such were some of the means adopted to fill the ranks of the Army in this country, where liberty and equality before the law are supposed to be fundamental axioms. The conscriptions described 'were limited, or class conscriptions. They were, therefore, both vicious in theory and tyrannical in practice, being founded upon the monstrous principle that in emergencies some men are bound to serve their country and some are not.* It will be noted, too, that in the case of the impressment of paupers this limited conscription was peculiarly unjust ; for it came to this, that those who by the misfortune of their birth and other circumstances were already at a disadvantage in the struggle for life, were chosen to bear the largest share of that burthen which should fall equally on all.

The principle I have just alluded to, that of *universal* obligation, was the basis of the Ballot

no man under 5 feet 5 inches, under the second no man under 5 feet 4 inches, was to be impressed.

* Captain Hime's essay.

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Act of 1757, which laid down that every able-bodied man is bound to serve his country in time of need. Unfortunately, substitution was allowed, with the inevitable result that those who were in better circumstances bought themselves off, and left the ranks full of *poor* substitutes; in other words, it was limited or class conscription under another and more pleasing form.

‘The principle of substitution led to this result, that few *but substitutes* were to be found in the ranks. The evil did not, however, terminate here; for the temptation to procure another high Bounty by another substitution led to a large amount of desertion. . . . Out of 45,492 men raised for the United Kingdom in the years 1803-4, by the operation of the Ballot, 40,998 were substitutes, and . . . the force was reduced by desertion and death by 8,106 men’* (the *deaths* were only 599).

Lord King, speaking March 8, 1805, quoted Mr. Pitt’s statement that 40,000 were obtained by the ballots, ‘out of which 2,000 were obtained for personal service, and the remaining very disproportionate number of 38,000 *men were paid substitutes*.’†

* Clode, vol. i., p. 291.

† Cobett’s ‘Parliamentary Debates,’ vol. iii., p. 793.

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Again, out of 26,085 men raised by the ballot from August, 1807, to March, 1808, '22,956 were substitutes, only 3,129 being principals,'* and the tax paid for substitutes varied from £45 to £10.

The large sums paid by principals to procure substitutes led to high bounties in the Militia, and this in turn to high bounties in the Army, 'till at length a sort of limit was produced, not merely by the consideration of expense, but by the effect which high bounties had in producing desertion.†

Thus, the ballot, under the system of substitution, besides resulting in *class* conscription, is also the parent of high bounties for service in the Regular Army; it has further been estimated that each recruit costs in *ballot expenses* £9 8s.‡

I shall deal later on with the proposal associated with the name of Lord Wemyss, to put in force an amended Militia Ballot Act *without substitution*, a proposal which is at least based upon the just *principle* of universal military service, but which has nevertheless grave drawbacks.

* Clode, vol. i., p. 291.

† Mr. Windham's speech in the House of Commons, 1807.

‡ Clode, vol. i., p. 47.

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V. *Reasons for the Failure of the Voluntary System.*—It may, perhaps, have occurred to the reader that there is possibly some undiscovered reason for the failure of the voluntary system in this country, and that if we could only lay our finger upon this 'unknown quantity' we might give the voluntary system a fresh lease of life, and continue (as a nation) to shift our responsibilities on to other shoulders. Unfortunately, there is no mystery whatever about the cause of the failure I have described. *The failure of the Voluntary System is due simply and solely to the progress of industry*, and to the spread of the industrial spirit, which is its natural and inevitable concomitant. 'All political investigation of a rational kind,' says M. Comte,* 'proves the primitive tendency of mankind, in a general way, to a military life, and to its issue in an industrial life. No enlightened mind disputes the continuous decline of the military spirit, and the gradual ascendancy of the industrial. We see now, under various forms, and more and more indisputably, even in the very heart of armies, the repugnance of modern society to a military life.† We see that compulsory re-

* 'Philosophie Positive,' translated by Martineau.

† He is referring, of course, only to the masses, while admitting that there are always plenty of officers.

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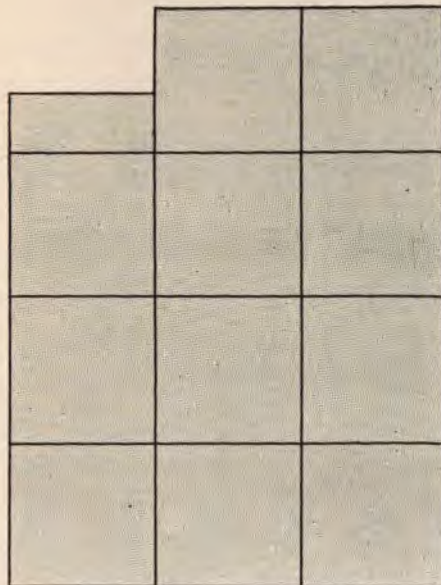
cruiting becomes more and more necessary, and that there is less and less voluntary persistence in that mode of life.'

In fact, history shows that man naturally passes through three distinct phases in his attitude towards the military life. There is the early stage of society, in which every man is a warrior, partly by the dire necessity of the struggle for existence, partly by the sheer love of bloodshed and plunder inherent in savage man.

Then, when security has been gained and plunder has produced plenty, man turns to the arts of peace in order to obtain from them the means of enjoyment. Agriculture, industry, and commerce begin to flourish, and gradually absorb more and more of the population, leaving the military career to the adventurous and ambitious spirits, who scorn the soft delights of peace to 'seek the bubble reputation at the cannon's mouth.' But as wealth increases, and the standard of living rises, the number and quality of the soldiers relatively to the population decrease. For under the influence of the industrial spirit men adopt the profession of arms on the same prudential grounds on which they embrace any other calling. The result



£67,000,000 in 1800.



£764,000,000 in 1898.

THE EXPORTS AND IMPORTS OF THE UNITED KINGDOM IN 1800 AND IN 1898. (See p. 19.)

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may be given in the words of Professor Cairnes :* 'The State being thrown for the supply of soldiers upon the labour-market, and the soldier's vocation being . . . one that with the progress of society steadily declines in public estimation, two important consequences result : first, in order to attract a sufficient supply of men to the ranks the Government is under the necessity of constantly raising its terms—of raising them, not merely in proportion to the general advance of the labour-market, but so as to compensate the declining honour into which the soldier's† trade has fallen ; and, secondly, the recruits, thus attracted, come more and more from the lowest . . . classes of the community.'

Finally the last phase is reached, in which nations are compelled to revert to the original conditions of universal military service. Just as *necessity* made every man a warrior in order to defend the community in the early 'struggle for existence,' so *necessity* calls for the armed service of every citizen in order to preserve the enormous accumulation of the fruits of industry from the

* 'Political Essays,' p. 209.

† Not the *soldier*, of course, since it is the interest of all who profit by his doing their work to laud him to the skies when he is at it.

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aggression of jealous competitors in the *new* 'struggle for existence'—the struggle for the markets.

History shows us only one alternative to this necessity—the employment of foreign mercenaries, which led to the ruin of Carthage, and eventually of Rome.

Thus, Nature and History alike speak to us in a clear voice. 'Fortunate above other nations,' they say, 'you have in the past been enabled, as an island race, to escape the sacrifices demanded from other peoples. They have learnt the noble lesson of personal self-sacrifice in many a bitter struggle for existence, in many a season of humiliation ; they have seen their territories invaded, their cities in ruins, their villages in flames, their homes desecrated, their women insulted ; they have had to submit to the hard terms of the conqueror, and have groaned under the taxation necessary to pay the huge indemnity demanded as the price of defeat. Well, they have learnt the lesson of preparedness, and stand armed and ready to defend the fruits of their labours. You, on the other hand, know nothing of a struggle for *existence*, of a war carried into your own homes. Supreme beyond all question on the seas, and enjoying *internal* peace while all

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the world was at war, you have conquered, colonized and expanded till you own one-fifth of the habitable globe, and you have easily piled up a wealth and commerce that are the envy of less fortunate nations. But now these nations have not only large and splendidly-trained armies, but powerful and rapidly growing fleets which are undermining your maritime supremacy year by year, while you find it ever more difficult to fill the ranks of your small army, or even to supply the men necessary for your fleets. The real sinews of war are, ultimately, *men*, not *money*. It is time, high time, for you to face the question : Will you bring the sacrifice of personal service to your country which is demanded as a *national insurance* against disaster, or will you risk the loss of all your wealth and commerce, the invasion of your territories, and the inevitable loss of all your colonies and possessions which such an invasion would entail ? If so, future generations will point the finger of scorn at you, as a nation which, while willing to enjoy the fruits of greatness, selfishly refused to recognise the responsibilities which that greatness implies.'

Part III

The Advantages of Universal Military Service

‘An armed people is the true constitutional militia of the kingdom.’—BURKE.

‘One line, and one line only, leads to complete national safety, and that is compulsory service for Home Defence.’—LORD WEMYSS, June, 1900.

‘The Militia is, after all, the mainstay of the British nation and the backbone of the British Army.’—LORD WOLSELEY, August, 1900.

THREE things are required to assure the safety of the British Empire. These are :

1. A strong Navy, *at least* equal in strength to the combined forces of any two Powers—equal not merely in actual numbers, but having regard to the duties which the vast extent of our Empire and our sea-borne commerce lay upon our fleets.

2. A highly-trained, long-service Army for garrison and ‘police’ duties in India and in

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those parts of the Empire where a large native population requires the presence of a garrison as a measure of precaution, and for such ports and coaling-stations as cannot well be garrisoned by men drawn from the resident population.

3. An immense Reserve of men—a *Pan-Britannic Militia*—consisting of all able-bodied white men throughout the Empire. This Militia would be essentially intended for Home Defence in whatever part of the Empire it happened to be raised, the Australian Militia for Australian Defence, the Canadian for Canada, etc. It would *never* be called on for garrison duty away from home, but it would form a Reserve of men who would be called upon to fill up the casualties in the ranks of the foreign-service Army in time of war, and would reinforce it to any extent in a big war, such as we are engaged in at the present moment.

Let us see how such a Militia would be composed. In making the following proposals, I beg the reader to understand that I do not attempt to deal fully with details, but simply to suggest the rough outlines of a scheme that would at all events exemplify the working of the great *principle* I wish to advocate, namely, Universal Military Service. I need hardly remark

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that the extension of that principle to our Colonies is entirely a matter for *their* choice and decision, but the scheme for a British Militia throughout the Empire seems to me a noble one, and I have little doubt that if *we* give them the lead in self-sacrifice and patriotism they will follow.*

1. Every able-bodied white man throughout the Empire would undergo one year's military servicet in the British Militia, between the ages of eighteen and twenty-three—the maritime population in the Naval Militia.

2. He would then pass into the Militia Reserve, which would consist of three parts, corresponding to the German Reserve, Landwehr and Landsturm respectively. The First Reserve would include men between eighteen and twenty-five; the Second, men between twenty-five and thirty; and the Third (which would *never* be called upon for foreign service of any kind) would include men up to forty. Men in the First Reserve would undergo two trainings of

* Indeed, it looks very much like as if *they* would lead and *we* shall have to follow, judging by the splendid example of Home Defence measures which has been put forward by Mr. Seddon, Premier of New Zealand and Minister of Defence.

† Eighteen months for Cavalry and Artillery. The time of service in the Militia Reserve would be shortened, to make up for the longer period of training required for these arms.

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eight weeks each in the course of their period; men in the Second Reserve, two trainings of a fortnight each. Men in the Third Reserve might be called out for two trainings of a week each, but it would probably not be necessary to insist upon this.

3. Every man who passed an examination of a certain standard (which should not be lower than that of London Matriculation), would be relieved of six months' of his service in the Active Militia, *but not of any of the subsequent training in the Reserves.*

4. Exemption from service would be granted to the physically unfit,* and to all those classes who obtain exemption in the French or German Armies—*e.g.*, candidates for Holy Orders, sole supporters of a poor family, etc.

Such is, in outline, the scheme of Universal Military Service which I would earnestly ask every Briton to consider. It amounts practically to this—that every able-bodied subject of the Queen would give one year of his early manhood to acquiring the military training necessary

* Who would pay a tax in some measure proportionate to their means instead. Of course, the poor who were physically incapable of service would be exempt from the tax, as in Switzerland. In the latter country the tax is 5s. per man, and 1s. 6d. on each £50 of net income.

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to fit him to defend the glorious Empire to which it is his privilege to belong. It does not seem an extravagant price to pay for such advantages as British citizenship confers. In any case, I believe I have shown that such a sacrifice is *necessary*. Let us now consider the *advantages* which Universal Military Service would confer.

I. It would give us security from invasion, and, what is almost as important, from *attempted invasion*. For it would give us, on a very moderate computation, a peace footing of 400,000, with a war footing of at least 2,500,000. The peace footing of 400,000 would be exclusive of the men in the professional or standing Army and the Navy. The seafaring population would, of course, go through their one year's service in the Navy, as is the case with the 'maritime' population in all Continental nations. This would solve completely and satisfactorily the difficult question of our Naval Reserve, a force which is at present confessedly hardly sufficient to bring the *personnel* of the Navy up to war strength, while there is practically *no Reserve* of trained seamen, or, rather, man-o'-war's men, to fill up the gaps caused by casualties in a big naval war.*

* All the other naval Powers possess *real* Reserves.

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II. The simple fact that the British Empire would be strong to resist attack would be the surest guarantee of peace in nearly every part of the globe. At the present moment, the very wealth and extent of our Empire and commerce, *ill-defended as they are*, are a perpetual incentive to attack on the part of those nations which are aiming at a larger share of the world's trade, and to whom the deposition of Great Britain from her commercial supremacy would mean a large increase in wealth and prosperity. Now, as in the past, the true maxim is *Si vis pacem, para bellum*. Does anyone doubt for a moment that the peace of Europe for the past thirty years has been largely due to the complete preparedness for war of Germany—a preparedness well known and appreciated in France? It is certain that, if Germany had not been so prepared, the desire of *revanche* would have impelled France to try the fortune of war once again, in the hope of recovering at once her provinces and her prestige.

Let us take a case nearer home. Does anyone imagine that the War with the Transvaal would have cost what it has in blood and treasure if there had been Universal Military Service throughout the Empire? As a matter of

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fact, every man between eighteen and fifty is subject to military service in Cape Colony.* The very fact that Cape Colony alone could have put 50,000 men into the field, if her law had not remained a dead letter, would have made the Boer Republics hesitate before throwing down the gauntlet to the British Empire. Suppose, however, that the Boers had entered upon the war in spite of that fact, they would have been met by 60,000 or 70,000 trained soldiers,† without counting the small garrison (say 10,000 troops) of the Imperial Army who would have been present in South Africa. If necessary, we could have sent 100,000 men in the early part of the war with the same facility as we sent 10,000. We should not then have seen British territory invaded and held for months, and small British garrisons surrounded and in danger of capitulation, nor heard the tale of disaster upon disaster, which cast a gloom over us in those dark days of December and January. Above all, we should have felt secure that, come what might in South Africa, any nation which should feel inclined to take ad-

* By the law of 1878.

† Putting the war strength of Cape Colony and Natal at a very low estimate.

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vantage of our troubles in South Africa would have had to face, besides the British Navy, 'a nation in arms.' No one can pretend that the country felt such security for several anxious months of the year 1900.

III. If every Briton in our great Empire were to go through the same military training, an indissoluble tie would be formed, uniting the whole of our race in the strong bonds of a brotherhood-in-arms. Thus the great question of Imperial Federation would find its simplest and most natural solution. History has shown us again and again that nothing is more powerful in strengthening the spirit of national unity, and in obliterating petty and local jealousies, than common service under one flag. It was the statesman-like perception of this truth, founded on some of the strongest instincts of human nature, that led Chatham, that great Englishman, to turn the rebellious hatred of the Highlanders into the magnificent loyalty which has given us some of the finest regiments in the British Army ; and I look forward to the time when a second Chatham shall imitate that happy boldness by turning the splendid men who have been fighting against us in South Africa into soldiers of the Queen. It was the army that

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transformed Italy from a group of jealous and quarrelsome States into a united nation. It was the army that obliterated the distrust and mutual jealousies of the various German principalities, and made Prussian, Saxon, and Bavarian remember that they belonged to one united Fatherland. It is the army that, at the present moment, is the one firm link that binds together the ill-assorted conglomeration of jarring nationalities that form the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. And there can be no doubt that the present war has done more to unite all the Colonies to the Mother Country in one British Commonwealth than a hundred Acts of Federation, even though passed by an Imperial Parliament containing representatives of every part of the Empire. What is needed to cement that union, so that it shall be strong as adamant, is the adoption of the grand principle of manhood service to the Empire.

IV. The fact that every man would go through a military training, and might be called upon to serve his country in arms, would give us a patriotism of the truest and most splendid kind.* Every man would be a true Imperialist

* The noble words of the German Emperor (New Year's Eve, 1899), 'It is the highest honour to dedicate one's blood

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when he felt the solidarity which personal military service gives. On the other hand, the blatant Jingoism, which so often arrogates to itself the title of patriotism, would disappear before the feeling of responsibility which is ever present with a conscript nation. I would particularly draw the reader's attention to this latter point, as it is often said that Universal Military Service would make the British Empire aggressive and Jingo in spirit. It is my firm conviction that nothing tends to make a nation more averse to seek the arbitrament of the sword than the knowledge that the calamities of war would fall *upon the whole nation*, not upon a small section of it.

V. Universal Military Service would supply our needs in the *fairest* manner possible; for every able-bodied man would have to serve, and the element of chance would be eliminated.

This brings me to the question of the Militia Ballot without Substitution, as proposed by the Earl of Wemyss. I have so profound a respect for the noble patriotism and public spirit which inspire the veteran volunteer whom the public

and purse to the Fatherland in her armed service,' should find an echo in the heart of every true Briton, who has a Fatherland so much more glorious than the one he refers to,

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better know under his old title of Lord Elcho, that I feel great reluctance in criticising his proposal adversely. Indeed, on the principle that 'Half a loaf is better than no bread,' I should welcome it, as at any rate offering some slight prospect of bringing our military forces up to the strength voted by Parliament, if I did not believe that, apart from other grave drawbacks, it is impossible to carry it out satisfactorily. There are four great objections to the Militia Ballot :

1. The element of chance makes it *unfair*. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman called it a proposal for 'conscription tempered by the roulette-board.' Lord Wemyss has emphatically declared that it is not 'conscription'; and in the sense in which the word is ordinarily used it certainly is not. 'Conscription' in this sense means the obligation on *every* man to serve, whereas the Ballot Bill means that certain men, on whom the lot falls, shall serve, while others shall, by pure luck, get off. This is conscription in its old, bad sense, the conscription that led to disaster in France. Let us take an instance of what might easily occur under the ballot system : A is a hard-working young medical student or solicitor (under twenty-five), B is an idle loafer

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at the public-house ; A might be balloted and B get off. Or, again, C is a hard-working young carpenter or artisan (unmarried and under twenty-five), D is a young 'man about town,' who spends most of his time in amusements of one kind or another ; C might have to serve, while D would get off. The discontent aroused by a system working by the blind laws of chance would soon render it intolerable, and, what is even worse, probably make it impossible to introduce a system carrying out to its full extent the principles of the equality of all before the law, and of the duty of personal service to the country. The Duke of Bedford hit the nail on the head when he said that, if there is to be conscription in England, it must be universal and not partial.

2. The uncertainty pertaining to the ballot system would introduce a most disturbing element into trade and commerce. An employer of labour would never know when, or how many of, his employes might be called away ; and it might easily happen that, of two manufacturers or merchants competing in the same business, the one might find all his men balloted, while the other got off scot-free. I believe that this element of uncertainty would make the ballot

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system intolerable to the trading and manufacturing interests in the country.*

3. I believe that it would be *impossible* to prevent substitution, whereby even the *principle* of universal obligation would disappear. This, it may be said, is a matter of opinion. At any rate, my opinion is founded on the lessons of history,† and on the fact that it is impossible, even with the present small numbers, to prevent men deserting and re-enlisting in four or five different battalions in order to obtain another bounty each time, showing how difficult it is to identify individuals when their interest lies in escaping identification.

4. There would be a great danger that the offer of exemption from the ballot to efficient Volunteers and Yeomen would result in an

* A great Manchester merchant who is strongly in favour of compulsory military service writes to me condemning the Militia Ballot as possessing 'the same vicious element of chance as the old French system of *tirer au sort*, at the annual balloting for privates in the French Army, in every village and commune in France.'

Needless to say, this system has been entirely abolished in France, since the disasters of 1870 taught the French people the lesson that *everyone* must do his duty in the matter of national defence.

† See p. 113 of Captain Hime's essay, 'Universal Conscription: the Only Answer to the Recruiting Question.'

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enormous accession to the numbers of the latter, who *cannot*, from the circumstances in which they are placed, give the time necessary to become efficient soldiers ; while this easy way of escape from really thorough training would tend to prevent enlistment into the Militia or Regular Army. This was the result in 1803, when Parliament raised a large force, ' which, though *raised under the threat of Conscription*, may be classed as a Volunteer Force. . . . * To avoid service in the Militia or Regular Army, 420,000 offers of *voluntary* [the word is italicized by Clode himself] service were received out of 500,000 persons liable to serve.' This would mean something like 1,500,000 such offers now—in other words, a ' Volunteer ' force so huge as to embarrass the Government, but from which the latter could not *demand* the minimum training necessary to make it a really efficient safeguard to the country. The universal condemnation with which the Government proposal for a month's training was met, even in a year of crisis like the present, is sufficient to prove this. The result might well be that a Member of Parliament could with truth use the same words

* Clode's ' Military Forces of the Crown,' vol. i., p. 312. The italics are mine.

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as Mr. Windham in 1804: 'The Right Honourable Gentleman [Mr. Addington] has not only not provided an Army, but has rendered it impossible *that an Army should be provided*; for the Volunteer system had, either by design or mistake, locked up 400,000 men of the active population of the country.'*

VI. Service side by side in the ranks of the National Army would bring together all classes of the community to their mutual advantage. It is a curious fact that, with so much talk of England being a truly democratic nation, there is probably none in which the chasm between the 'classes' and the 'masses' is so wide; with the result that, in spite of the enormous sums annually spent in *charity*, the upper classes are, as a whole, utterly out of touch with their poorer fellow-citizens, and have but the vaguest notions of the terrible conditions under which millions of them 'live, move, and have their being.'†

* The actual numbers in the Estimates for 1803-4 are given at 449,943 for the United Kingdom (Clode, vol. i., p. 316).

† I cannot resist quoting in this connection the following passage from an admirable address delivered by Mr. T. C. Horsfall, J.P., of Macclesfield, one of our leading educationists and philanthropists, on the occasion of the Prize Distribution at the Macclesfield Grammar Schools, July 27, 1900: 'I am convinced that in no country where the people are as

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VII. Universal Military Service would immensely improve the physique of the nation. For the whole of its manhood would have to go through a period of physical training, admirably adapted to develop the whole body, just at the period when such development is most necessary.

I have not space here to enter upon the whole question of the deterioration in the physique of the nation, which is engaging the attention of many of the leading educationalists and philanthropists* in the country. Suffice it

kind-hearted as most English people are would it be possible for the slums and semi-slums of London and Manchester to co-exist with compulsory military service. If . . . young men of the well-to-do classes had to serve side by side with young men whose bodies, minds and souls were obviously ruined by slum conditions of life, and they also heard year after year that, for one such wreck who was just strong enough to be able to serve, there were at least half a dozen in the same district too much ruined in body to serve at all, then I am sure slums would soon be put an end to. *And I do not believe that by any other means than the adoption of compulsory military service it will be possible to give the rich the knowledge of the real condition of the poor, which alone can make a self-ruling country resolve that slums shall cease to exist*' (*Macclesfield Courier and Herald*, July 28, 1900).

* I would refer the reader to the following little works : 'The Rush to Ruin, and the Remedy,' George Quick, R.N. ; 'Physical Training,' T. C. Horsfall (J. E. Cornish, Manchester); and, above all, to the Reports of the Army Medical Department, which, as I have shown fully above, throw a strong

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to say that it is a question of the gravest import to the present and future well-being—nay, to the *life*—of the nation.*

Year by year the population of England is being more and more swallowed up by our big cities.† The healthy agricultural pursuits that made the sturdy English yeomen of days gone by have given way to the manufacturing and industrial life which crowds men in cities, where light, air, trees, and open spaces—all that is needed for the healthy physical development of a nation's men and women—are wanting. Instead of approaching to that ideal condition described by Ruskin, in which a nation's wealth

light upon the physical condition of the manhood of our large towns; for from them, be it remembered, the huge bulk of our recruits is drawn.

* A gentleman who is well able to speak with full authority in the matter writes to me: 'Toleration of the condition of our large towns for another thirty years must ruin the English race.'

† In 1891 71·7 per cent. of the whole population of England and Wales was described as 'urban'; and 40·6 lived in towns of over 50,000 inhabitants. The percentage of increase of the urban population was three times as great as that of the rural population in the period 1881-1891 ('Statesman's Year-Book,' 1900, p. 19). (See, too, an article in the *Morning Post*, August 4, 1900, entitled 'The Rural Exodus,' by Mr. P. Anderson Graham, and the correspondence it has given rise to.)

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consists in the 'largest possible number of healthy and happy men and women,' it looks as if some day this England of ours might be described as the land 'where wealth accumulates and men decay.'

Fortunately, efforts are being made in every direction to counteract the evil effects of crowded city life on the physique of the working classes. Lord Meath and the Lads' Drill Association are doing splendid work, and have been trying to induce the Government to make military drill compulsory in all elementary schools; while Dr. Warre, the Headmaster of Eton, has spoken strongly in favour of similar and more far-reaching measures in the secondary schools.

The physical advantages of military service, combined (as they have always been in the German Army) with a scientific system of gymnastics, are so obvious that it is hardly necessary to enlarge upon them. But it is important to note that even the pale, weedy youths who are now 'specially' enlisted *below* the present miserable standard improve in the most wonderful manner after two or three months of drill,* good food, and healthy sur-

* Even drill alone produces the most astonishing results; *gymnastics* has only *quite recently* been made an integral part in

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roundings. And there are hundreds of thousands of such youths loafing and loitering about the public-houses and the slums of our big cities, ready victims to disease, and swelling the number of the unemployed and criminal classes.*

Anyone who has observed abroad the transformation effected even in the physically fit but heavy, slouching, stupid foreign agricultural labourer by the military service he undergoes, and who has seen the smart, alert, bright-eyed, straight-backed, broad-chested fellow he is when he leaves the ranks, must wish that this boon could be extended to those classes in England,

the training of our soldiers. The Report of the Inspector-General of Recruiting for 1898 shows the following interesting results of the training of these 'special' recruits :

		Number re-measured in January, 1899.	Percentage who had reached the Standard.
Enlisted in 1898	{ Between January 1 and June 30 ...	2,522	73
	{ Between July 1 and September 30 ...	2,100	63
	{ Between October 1 and December 31 ...	2,882	43
	{ Prior to 1895 ...	2,788	90
Enlisted	{ During 1895 ...	599	87
	{ During 1896 ...	758	86
	{ During 1897 ...	2,731	77

* 'The Bishop of Stepney said recently that, in that district alone, there were 100,000 skulking loafers, who constituted a danger to London and a peril to the Empire' ('War, Famine and Food-supply,' R. B. Marston).

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in which moral depravity is so often the effect as well as the cause of physical degeneracy. At present about 40,000 persons die of consumption in the United Kingdom annually. Who can doubt that the splendid physical development given to young men at the critical age of eighteen to twenty-five by a year's military service would be the best prophylactic against this fell disease? For medical science has now proved beyond doubt that tuberculosis can only attack those who are predisposed to it by a general low state of health.

At the present moment an enormous amount of time is devoted at school and college to sports; and parents are beginning to find out that, while the supremacy of games over all other matters produces a high average of physical development among the youth of the well-to-do classes, it is very often at the cost of their progress in the education which is to fit them for their work in the battle of life; to say nothing of the many lives that are ruined by the physical strain of severe training and attempts to 'break records'—*i.e.*, to do something out of the common rather than to aim at a harmonious general development of the body.*

* See, on this question of games, the address above referred

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On the other hand, hundreds of thousands of our male population get *no physical training at all*. Would it not be an advantage to the nation to adopt a system which would give healthy physical training and muscular development to *all* Englishmen, instead of only to the favoured few?*

VIII. The training of the whole manhood of the nation in discipline, duty, obedience to

to—'The Influence on the Nation of our System of Physical Training' (T. C. Horsfall).

* I need hardly say that I would most strongly advocate compulsory physical drill and gymnastics in *all* schools, both for the sake of the immediate advantages obtainable, and as a preparation for the national duty of military service. With such preliminary training in the A B C of a soldier's work, and with every encouragement to the youth of the nation to make themselves as proficient in the use of the rifle as their forefathers were with the long-bow, the actual *war-training* during the year of service would be looked upon as a highly interesting experience and good 'fun' by the vast majority of the young men of Britain. Careful inquiry among different Continental peoples shows that the average patriotic and honourable man feels the humiliation of rejection on physical grounds most keenly, though there are, of course, some skulkers who are only too glad of the opportunity afforded of shirking their duty. They are of the type of the young men who, according to Lord Salisbury, fled to America at the mere mention of the Militia Ballot. One can only say that such men 'leave their country for their country's good,' and it can well afford to lose them.

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authority, manliness and self-mastery would prove a *moral* and *intellectual* factor of untold value in the life of the people, while our officers, knowing that they were forming not merely soldiers, but citizens, would by precept and example place before their men a high ideal of duty. Only those who have lived some considerable time among a people who possess a national conscript army can understand what a valuable moral factor that institution forms in the life of the nation. During his period of military service every man learns the lesson of discipline, ready obedience to authority, absolute devotion to duty, and thoroughness in the performance of the smallest detail. He learns to understand the nobility of work done 'in an orderly, soldierly, well-guided, wholesome way' (Ruskin : 'Work'), and the importance of organization and method in dealing with the simplest practical matters ; he gets imbued with that feeling of personal responsibility and with that spirit of self-sacrifice for the good of the community without which social life is little more than a name ; above all, he realizes that he, mere unit though he be, has a real share in his country's fate ; he knows that at any moment he may be called upon to defend that country ; in a word,

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he feels the warm glow of true patriotism which comes with the liability and the readiness to lay down his life in his country's service. Such solidarity of interest is impossible to the man who merely has to put his hand into his pocket and grumblingly pay more taxes, while others are fighting and falling to defend *his* life and liberty.

With regard to the educational value of a thorough military training to the whole nation, but especially to the working classes, the most competent judges are agreed that Germany's extraordinary success in industry and commerce is largely due to the excellent training in *method* and *thoroughness* received by the whole of her working classes during the period of military service. It has been well said that 'to a young labourer military training is as great, even a greater, advantage than University training to a young man intended for a professional career.' In the discussion on Captain Ardagh's lecture* in 1876, Colonel Robertson, who quoted the above words of Sir Charles Trevelyan, added: 'If this be so, then that statesman who shall

* 'Comparative Cost of Armies of Different Nations, and the Loss to a Country by Conscription' (*Journal of R.U.S. Institution*, 1876).

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pass a law exacting from every Englishman the duty of one year's military training, so far from imposing an unjust tax or an intolerable burden on the people, will confer on every labouring man in England a most valuable boon, a benefit of a very real and practical kind.'

There is probably no quality in which, as a nation, we are more deficient than in *method*. This is so completely recognised that we have almost turned it into a boast, proudly referring to our habit of 'muddling through in the end.' It is certainly a curious fact that, while we pride ourselves on being a practical nation *par excellence*, our intellectual interests and pursuits lie quite apart from our practical ones, with disastrous results in almost every branch of national life. The Germans, on the other hand, whom we have been accustomed to regard as a nation of learned theorists and dreamers, show a wonderful capacity for making theory and practice go hand-in-hand, and are so enabled to cut us out, not only in such matters as classical criticism and philology (in which we have been wont to acknowledge their pre-eminence in a condescending way), but in such eminently practical pursuits as the manufacture of steel and the winning of battles. Mr. C. C. Perry, in

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an article in the *Nineteenth Century* entitled 'Germany as an Object-Lesson,' says: 'In our long struggle with France we have remained victorious chiefly because to the valour and energy common to both nations we have added endurance, a virtue for which our neighbours have never been conspicuous. With the rise of Germany it may without exaggeration be affirmed that we have entered on a new era of national life. . . . To the courage, energy and endurance characteristic of the entire Germanic race, the Germans have added a measure of foresight, calculation and logical method of which we have, as a nation, little conception. It is not intelligence we lack, nor is that the quality in which we need fear competition with Germany.' No, what we lack is *method*, the power to apply intellectual processes to practical questions, and the habit of mind which is guided in its adoption of a particular course of action, not by the actual necessity of the moment, but by the abstract reasonableness of that course, by the conviction that it is the means best adapted to accomplish the end in view. And while undoubtedly Germany owes much of her success to her splendid system of education, not a little is due to the moral and intellectual training

184,728	MEN IN	1805
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157,863	MEN IN	1898
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THE EFFECTIVE STRENGTH OF THE REGULAR ARMY (HOME AND COLONIAL) IN 1805
AND IN 1898. (*See p. 25.*)



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given to each individual by the *Allgemeine Wehrpflicht*—the Universal Duty of Defence. A similar but *far less onerous* system would enable us, while giving the training to which I have referred, to exchange the *muddle* which has cost us so much in the past for that *method* of which, as a nation, we stand so much in need.

There is, too, another regrettable phenomenon which strikes the observer more and more forcibly. It is the growing tendency among all classes of the population to 'scamp' work—to think less of *duty* and more of *pleasure*, especially in its more expensive and unhealthy forms. In my opinion, there is nothing more legitimate in itself than the general demand for shorter hours of work, which *should* result in work being *better done*, because of the freer scope afforded to the healthy development, mental and physical, of the individual worker. But I am afraid it cannot be denied that the high sense of duty which regards work, not merely as a disagreeable necessity, but as the means of exercising the physical and mental activities of man in a useful way, is less and less to be found. On the other hand, the increased facilities of communication, the cheapness and wide dissemination of a very

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low type of 'literature' (saving the mark!), the growing extravagance and vulgarity of dress among the working classes, the large number of low-class music-halls, the undoubted *decrease* of *bonâ-fide* athletic sports, coupled with the detestable development of 'professionalism,' and of contests which are rapidly degenerating into gladiatorial shows—all these things are at once the causes and the outward symptoms of a tendency to seek amusement in vicious and unhealthy forms. Duty is a thing that can be taught as well as decimals, and there is surely no finer school for it than military training, in which a man learns at the same time the value of work done 'in a disciplined, wholesome, orderly way,' and the meaning of patriotism.

IX. By rescuing our physical and moral degenerates from the slums of our great cities, and letting them feel that they, too, could be of use to their country, we should turn them from 'hooligans' into men. We should thus save the nation enormous sums annually, which are now spent in supporting the prisons, workhouses and lunatic asylums to which these unfortunate creatures sooner or later gravitate. In considering the cost of universal military service, the saving that would undoubtedly be effected by

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this means ought to be taken into consideration.

X. By the adoption of a system which would only grant a reduction of the year's service to one of six months to those who passed an examination of a fairly high standard (like the London Matriculation), we should immensely raise the whole educational standard of the country. For every intelligent and fairly well-to-do youth would aim at passing such an examination, which would not only give him a shorter time in the ranks, but would insure to him a most valuable capital of knowledge with which to start his work in any career he might wish to enter. No German youth can enter any of the liberal professions without passing the Maturitäts Examen, which insures his possession of the broad groundwork of a sound general education. And even the Einjähriges Examen or the passing out of the Ober-Sekunda at a Gymnasium, by either of which he reduces the two years' service by half, is such a test of good general education as guarantees a high standard of mental culture throughout the leading classes in the country. Of course, this does not exempt the intelligent youth of the nation from the subsequent periodic training in

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the Reserve or the Landwehr: nor would it with us. But all foreigners with whom I have discussed the matter assure me that the short periods of training are looked forward to with delight as affording them a splendid holiday in the open air, and they invariably return from such outings *with a largely-increased stock of health and strength*. In fact, most young men abroad who do the one year's service aim at becoming officers of the Reserve, an ambition that entails a longer training when they are called out, and the passing of a fairly stiff examination in military knowledge. It is important, too, to remember that *every* foreign officer, whatever his social rank may be, spends six months in the ranks as a private. Of course, the average 'gentleman' spends a year in the ranks;* and the whole nation seems agreed that this service side by side with the highest and the lowest in the land has an excellent effect in fostering friendliness between all classes, and a splendid spirit of patriotism.

XI. I believe that the large forces we should

* The German one-year volunteer is not, however, as in France, obliged to sleep in the *chambrée* and take his meals with the other privates. He lodges near the barracks, and takes his meals where he likes, both, of course, at his own expense.

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obtain under the system of Universal Military Service for Home Defence throughout the Empire would cost us very little more in money than our present small Army with the heterogeneous collection of Auxiliary Forces which possess such doubtful value. Our present foreign garrisons amount to about 108,000 men, of which 74,000 are in India and *are paid out of Indian Funds*. This leaves 34,000 as the number of our Imperial Army that we have to consider. Under the scheme I propose, each part of the Empire (except India, and such territories as I have referred to above) would provide its own Home Defence Army at its own expense,* so that *primâ facie* even less than 34,000 Imperial troops would be required for

* At the present moment the whole British Army and Navy are at the disposal of any of our Colonies the moment danger threatens them. At the same time, the contributions of the Colonies towards Imperial expenditure are infinitesimal as compared to the payment made by the tax-payer in the United Kingdom: 'Out of every £100 raised from the United Kingdom, £28 was spent on the navy; out of every £100 of the aggregate revenue of the outlying Empire, 6s. per cent. was paid for the protection of commerce by the navy. The revenue of the United Kingdom bore the proportion of ninety-three times the amount spent on the navy by the outlying Empire' (Admiral Sir John Colomb, House of Commons, August 7, 1900). See also Mr. R. Robertson's speech on the same occasion.

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garrison service abroad. Let us, however, take a liberal estimate of 30,000 as the number of 'Imperial' troops required for garrison and police duty outside India, and to allow for a nucleus of highly-trained, long-service soldiers in the United Kingdom. Taking the *highest possible estimate* of their cost as £110 per man, these troops would cost £3,300,000 a year.* Again, taking the cost of the Home Defence Army of 400,000 men at the very high estimate of £55 per man, that Army would cost £22,000,000. This would give a total Army expenditure of £25,300,000—that is, about £2,000,000 more than the estimate for 1900-1, *quite irrespective of the cost of the war*.† Thus, we should pay £2,000,000 a year

* I am purposely taking a very high estimate, but, of course, that part of the professional army serving at *home* would receive the same rate of pay as at present, not the higher rate which they would get at *unhealthy* garrison stations in hot climates abroad.

† 'The Army Estimates had increased—his figures were quite irrespective of the cost of the war—from £18,000,000 in 1895-96 to £23,500,000 this year. He dared say when the war was over there would be a demand for a great increase in our regular army' (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, May 17, 1900). Sir George Clarke calculates that the addition of 100,000 men to the regular troops, recommended by Sir J. Wolfe Barry, 'would cost fully £7,000,000 per annum, in addition to large capital charges' ('Precautions for Imperial Safety,' *Nineteenth Century*, April, 1900).

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more *at the most* for a military force of 400,000 trained soldiers, with an immense reserve, which would render all attempt at invasion futile and foolish. In other words, we should pay £2,000,000 a year *insurance money* for a security which we *do not* and *cannot* possess under our present system. As a matter of fact, I believe that when the business sense of the whole nation is directed to our military organization, as it never has been in the past, the estimate I have taken would be greatly reduced, and we should probably not pay any more for security and efficiency than we do now for insecurity and inefficiency.

XII. This brings me to another point. It will be noted that I have scarcely written a word in criticism of the *efficiency* of our present enormously expensive army. Those who have studied the question of our whole military training must, however, have been fully aware how far that training was from being adapted to the conditions of modern warfare against civilized troops, and they have probably not been greatly surprised at the 'misfortunes' and 'regrettable incidents' which have been so frequent during this war. Indeed, a Prussian officer who has witnessed many of our autumn manœuvres in

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recent years wrote an article in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* in September, 1899, in which he exactly foretold almost everything that has since occurred, from the lack of reconnoitring and the ludicrously antiquated system of volley-firing down to the splendid and reckless courage of our officers, who would, he said, as in the past, lay down their lives in scores to atone for the omission of the most elementary precautions dictated by military science. He had seen our manœuvres in peace too often not to know what the result must be in war. But to the British nation as a whole the incidents to which I refer have come as a surprise, not to say as a shock. Well, such surprises could not be in store for a nation in which each man was a trained soldier. That nation would see that its officers and soldiers were trained in peace for the business of war. It would not, as hitherto, refuse them the necessary space in which to carry out manœuvres under such conditions that the officers could profit by them, and it would insist upon its soldiers being provided with the best weapons and its artillery with the best guns that money could buy.

XIII. In the event of war, the country would have at its disposition the services of all

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the available talent in the nation for the prompt and efficient carrying out of the many subsidiary, but vitally important, duties which war implies. Thus, all young doctors and surgeons, all veterinary surgeons, all civil and electrical engineers, etc., would, when called on to serve, take up that work for which they were most fitted by their previous training, and which they would probably have practised during their short period of training with the colours.

XIV. It is sometimes alleged that, in spite of a wonderful apparent prosperity, England has really attained the zenith of her greatness, and shows many signs of that decadence which has, through all ages, attacked nations that have grown wealthy too easily and at the cost of a widespread idleness, luxury, love of pleasure, and dislike of duty and responsibility. Whether there be any truth in this allegation or not, it is certain that in the adoption of universal military service we have at hand a splendid tonic and the best antiseptic remedy for such a state of things. If the Anglo-Saxon race rises to the noble sacrifice of personal military service to the Empire, it will stand so splendid, strong, and self-reliant among the nations of the world that we may well give the lie for centuries to come to the

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theory that there must necessarily be growth, culmination, and *decay* in the lives of nations. Nor can any student of history doubt that our retention of the hegemony of the world must be as beneficial to the cause of civilization, justice, and liberty as it is naturally desirable to the British race.

I have tried to put before my readers what appear to me to be the chief advantages to the nation, apart from the immediate one of security, which the compulsory service, or rather training, of the manhood of the nation for one year would confer. If ever it was true that a sacrifice for a good end generally brings some actual benefit as a reward, it seems to me to be pre-eminently the case with the sacrifice of personal service to the country. I am convinced (and I have seen the results in many Continental countries) that the advantages of military training—*for a short period*, be it understood—are so great from the physical, moral, intellectual, and educational point of view that, to paraphrase a celebrated saying, if the necessity for it did not exist, it would be the highest wisdom to invent it.

Part IV

Arguments against Compulsory Military Service

I SHALL now attempt to deal as fully and as fairly as possible with all the arguments against Universal Military Service that have occurred to me in the course of many years' study of the question.

I. 'It is an interference with the rights and liberty of the subject.'

This is one of the commonest arguments urged by those who labour under the delusion that there is a contradiction in terms between 'a free people' and 'conscription.'*

* In the article on 'Compulsory Military Service,' in the *United Service Magazine* for August, 1900, Dr. J. M. Maguire quotes the following passage from one of the greatest authorities on constitutional history: '*There is nothing incompatible with freedom in a conscription or forced levy of men for the defence of the country. It may be submitted to in the freest republic*' (as in Switzerland and in the United States during the Civil War);

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seem to forget that our whole social system is held together by various laws of compulsion applied to the individual for the good of the community. We are a free people, yet we are compelled to pay taxes for the support and education of the poor ; we are compelled, as owners, to keep our houses in repair and in a proper sanitary condition ; we are compelled to notify cases of infectious disease ; we are even compelled to actively assist the police in the execution of their duty when called upon to do so. In fact, there are a hundred and one ways in which our solidarity with the community at large is impressed on us by laws of compulsion. Is it not, then, preposterous to urge the 'rights' of the individual to escape the most sacred and fundamental duty of citizenship—a duty upon which public and private liberty alike depend for their preservation ? The truth is, we hear a great deal too much nowadays about *rights*, and far too little about *duties* ; it is a phenomenon that is at the root of the 'no-one-to-blame' reply of the responsible leaders of the people, as well as of many an unjust strike and of much

'like the payment of taxes, the services of every subject may be required in such form as the State determines' ('Constitutional History of England,' pp. 22, 23, Erskine May).

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work ill-done ; 'greater freedom and less responsibility,' to use a well-known phrase of Mr. Gladstone's, seems to be a favourite motto with a class that is rapidly growing in numbers. It is the highest time that this should cease, and that true liberty should be understood to mean that 'freedom' which comes of self-control, self-mastery, and a high sense of duty, lest Milton's line should come to be true of us as a nation :

'License they mean when they cry "Liberty!"'

II. 'It is un-English.'

This argument seems to be used by opponents of compulsory military service, on the good old principle, 'Give a dog a bad name and hang him.' Let us examine its worth. There are only two possible meanings that such a phrase can convey. Either it means that compulsory service is 'not in consonance with the best traditions of our race'—in other words, that it is 'unconstitutional'—*or* that there is something unworthy, low, and mean about the idea that makes it peculiarly unacceptable to the 'highly-developed conscience' of the English people.

1. I have shown fully in Part II. that, so far from being contrary to the best traditions of

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our race, it is the principle upon which our military service was founded, from the earliest times down to the present day; for, *at the present moment*, but for the annual suspension of the Militia Ballot Act (which is, as I have shown, an *unfair* form of the old law of the universal obligation of military service), *every able-bodied man in the United Kingdom is liable for service in the Militia*. All the most glorious pages of our military history* were written in the days when Universal Military Service was the basis of our system of defence *for the Navy as well as for the Army*. There is indeed nothing stranger than the manner in which opponents of obligatory service burke the fact that it is to conscription in its most cruel and outrageous form that we, in some measure, owe those victories on the sea besides which even the glories of Poitiers and Waterloo pale. It was the press-gang, odious and iniquitous as it was, that gave us large numbers of the seamen who made England mistress of the seas.†

* If we exclude some splendid incidents in the Crimean and present wars, which stand out conspicuous like islands in the sea of muddle and disaster which have been so common in both.

† In the *National Review* for August, 1900, Vice-Admiral Sir Cyprian Bridge gives data to prove that the numbers obtained

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2. It is hardly necessary to deal with the allegation that there is something unworthy of an Englishman in the idea of compulsory service to his country. Putting cant aside, the only thing that is discreditable to Englishmen is 'that by far the greater portion of able-bodied men in this country should deliberately shirk their duty as citizens, and that of the male population between the ages of twenty-five and forty not one in ten should discharge the most elementary form of military duty.'*

III. 'It would interfere with trade and commerce.'

This is undoubtedly true to a very limited extent, but the following considerations must, I think, be allowed to outweigh this objection :

1. An unsuccessful war, let alone an invasion, would not only *interfere* with trade and

by the press-gang have been greatly exaggerated. It is a little difficult to reconcile this with the passage quoted in full from Erskine May's 'Constitutional History of England' by Dr. J. Miller Maguire in the *United Service Magazine* for August, 1900. Lord Chatham's words are pretty clear on the subject : 'I am myself clearly convinced, and I believe that every man who knows anything of the English Navy will acknowledge, that without impressing it is impossible to equip a respectable fleet within the time in which such armaments are usually wanted.'

* Lord Newton, speaking on the Militia Ballot Bill, House of Lords, July 2, 1900.

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commerce, but practically *ruin* both. The adoption of Universal Military Service must be looked upon, as regards this matter, in the same light as an *insurance policy*. It would be, in very truth, simply a premium paid for national security. A merchant or manufacturer does not complain that the insurance money he pays interferes with his business; on the contrary, he would consider it the height of folly to grudge the money so paid, in order to have the present use of it, at the risk of losing his all by an unforeseen accident.* Moreover, Universal Military Service would prevent war. It would render peace absolutely certain.

2. With regard to the inconvenience incurred by the liability of employes to be called away for their period of service or training, it must be remembered that this would be a *regular* occurrence, foreseen and provided for by each

* Lord Salisbury's words, when urging 'the necessity of precaution in time,' may be recalled in this connection: 'It may be that your precautions will turn out to be entirely unnecessary. It will be a matter for hearty congratulation if it be so, but the loss you may thereby sustain is so inconceivably small compared with the loss you will sustain if your precautions are inadequate that you will not for a moment measure one against the other.' (Speech at the Primrose League meeting, May 9, 1900.)

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employer, who would, moreover, be in precisely the same position as his neighbour.*

3. All foreign merchants with whom I have discussed the matter have assured me that, while they readily accept the slight inconvenience incurred by having to provide a substitute in return for the national security obtained, they consider that they are amply repaid by the improved intelligence, habits of discipline, and power of methodic work which their employés bring back with them from their training.†

IV. 'Obligatory military service is an *intolerable burden*.'

'In considering the question, Is or is not compulsory military service beneficial? *the answer altogether depends on the length of the period for which the recruit is required to serve.*'‡

* Observe the difference between this and the uncertainty and consequent unfairness of the Militia Ballot.

† 'Everyone who has the slightest acquaintance in dealing with large bodies of employés knows that the most reliable are those who have had habits of discipline and punctuality instilled into them by military training' ('A Volunteer Officer,' in the *Daily Express*, August 2, 1900).

‡ Colonel Robertson, 8th King's Regiment, in the discussion on Captain Ardagh's lecture, 'Comparative Cost of Armies of Foreign Nations,' etc., at the R.U.S. Institution, March 31, 1876.

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The words I have italicized indicate the nature of the reply that may be fairly given to this objection. If the whole male population were to be called upon to give up four or five years of their life, as in Russia, or three, as in France, then compulsory military service might well be regarded 'as a most onerous and pernicious servitude,' which a nation might almost be justified in refusing to accept, even at the risk of invasion and national disaster. But compulsory military training for a *short period*, such as a year,* cannot by any stretch of the imagination be regarded as an 'intolerable burden' or as a heavy price to pay for assured national safety and for the other advantages I have dealt with in Part III.

V. 'Compulsory service would be really more costly than our present system, since it would take away the working classes from productive, wage-earning labour for a year, and so diminish the capital of the country.'

To this I answer :

* It is a curious coincidence that M. Urbain Gohier, in his 'L'Armée contre la Nation,' while strongly denouncing the three years' service in France, says : '*Une année de service, à vingt ans, n'est pas malsaine, elle dégourdit, elle fortifie le cher garçon.*' (See Mr. Coulton's 'A Strong Army in a Free State,' p. 30.)

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1. 'Productive' labour is an altogether relative term. The millions sterling spent annually on Insurance are not regarded by business men as unproductive Capital. Similarly, the sacrifice necessary to insure National Safety cannot be regarded by any sane man as wasteful and unproductive, for *without* such insurance no labour can be properly regarded as productive.

2. The admirable results, physical, mental, and intellectual, produced by a sound and scientific military training may be regarded as so much fixed capital supplied to the young labourer at the cost of the State—a fixed capital which greatly increases his wage-earning capacity, and is, therefore, invaluable to him, and through him to the industrial and commercial prosperity of the country. So that, so far from Universal Military Service diminishing the total wealth of the country, it would in a very few years probably add to it enormously, as it has done in the case of Germany, whose growth in prosperity is more rapid than that of any other nation.

VI. 'Compulsory service is unnecessary when the Voluntary System enables us to do what we have done in the present war. We have sent out 200,000 Regular Troops, and our own Volunteers, together with those from the

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Colonies, have supplied about 50,000 more between them.'

Well, I confess that I see no grounds for boasting in what we have done. For what does it come to? A nation of 40,000,000, possessing unlimited wealth and owning 48·5 per cent. of the total carrying-power of the world's shipping, has, in the course of many months, sent out 200,000 Regular Troops and Militia and 11,000 Volunteers to another part of the Empire 6,000 miles away.* I really fail to see anything very extraordinary in that performance, even if the facts are stated thus without any qualification, however proud we may be of the spirit shown by the Volunteers and the Militia. But when we look below the surface, the suggestion that the present war has demonstrated the success of the Voluntary System can hardly be seriously entertained. I will not return again to the conditions under which we have recruited our Army, and to the results which may be directly attributed to those conditions. Nor will I dwell upon the total lack of preparation for war,†

* Poor 'worn-out,' bankrupt Spain sent 200,000 men to Cuba, Porto Rico and Manila out of a population of only seventeen or eighteen millions; and Russia sent 34,000 men from the Black to the Yellow Sea in the month of July, 1900.

† I mean war in general, not this particular war.

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indicated by the want of proper guns (which had to be borrowed from our ships, and only came in the nick of time to save Ladysmith and 10,000 British troops from falling into the hands of the Boers), by the absence of reserves of ammunition (which had to be borrowed from the Volunteers), by the lack of cavalry and the refusal to accept mounted contingents from the Colonies, etc. It might be urged that all this could have occurred under a system of compulsory service, though I have shown that that is *highly improbable* (see p. 206). Suffice it to remind the reader that, when war broke out, not a single battalion of infantry or battery of artillery could be found in the United Kingdom ready for service; that we were obliged to endanger the safety of India by withdrawing 10,000 British troops from that country;* that the Volunteer contingents were obtained by skimming the cream of the Volunteer forces in this kingdom; that the country was left for months to be defended (after the Navy) almost entirely by a body of Auxiliary Forces,†

* The theory being that not a man of the British garrison can be properly spared.

† The reader must remember that the fine body of 18,000 infantry of the Reserve Battalions were not fully armed or equipped or ready to take the field even in August. (See

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imbued with admirable spirit indeed, but many of them without any proper military training; and the whole of them without organization, transport, modern guns, or a sufficiency of officers thoroughly trained in the highly scientific game of modern warfare; and that all this took place at a time when we had the extraordinary good-fortune to have 'both hands free' to deal with a conscript militia of 50,000 undisciplined peasants in a corner of Her Majesty's dominions. I hardly think that the most enthusiastic supporter of the Voluntary System, the most confirmed *laudator temporis acti*, can find matter for congratulation in all this, or, indeed, anything else but a solemn '*Mene, mene, tekel*,' writ so large on the wall of our edifice of Empire that those who run may read, and, reading, heed.

VII. *Militarism.*

This word sums up the fears of many who dread lest the adoption of universal military training should lead, on the one hand, to a spirit of aggressive Jingoism, and, on the other, to a subordination of the civil order to a military caste, and a consequent interference with freedom of speech and the liberty of the Press.

Mr. Wyndham's reply to a question on August 2, 1900, and an article on 'Our Paper Home Army,' in *To-day*, August 9.)

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I am too profoundly attached to the principles of true liberty not to feel the gravity of the objections here indicated ; and I freely confess that if an earnest study of the question had not convinced me that the apprehensions I have mentioned are entirely unfounded, I should hesitate to urge the adoption of a system which should give us even national security only at the price of that most precious boon—civil and religious liberty.

I am convinced, and the following considerations show, that there is no danger that the great principle I urge would lead to either of the evils referred to above :

1. As I have pointed out before, there is no better prophylactic against an irresponsible spirit of aggression and Jingoism than the feeling present with each man, that, if there is to be war, *he* will have a chance of undergoing *in person* those discomforts and dangers which in the past he has only *read of* while another man was doing all the fighting. The abolition of patriotism by proxy is the best antidote to the Jingo spirit that flourishes in our street mobs of irresponsible shouters.

2. Englishmen are far too apt, in comparing the measure of civil and religious liberty which

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obtains among Continental peoples with that which we enjoy, to put down the difference to the universal military service which prevails in those countries.* No student of European history is likely to fall into such an error. For no one who compares the oppression, not to say the tyranny, under which the peoples of nearly every Continental country laboured before 1848, with the enormous advance in civil and religious liberty which has taken place since, will contend that they have suffered any loss of liberty by the adoption of universal military service; yet in many of those countries the system has only been fully introduced comparatively recently.†

3. The whole civilized world has, in the course of the Nineteenth Century, become so thoroughly impregnated with the ideas of freedom and with the demand for the greatest liberty of the individual *compatible with the*

* We must remember, too, that the religious liberty of which we boast is not of such very ancient origin—witness the penal laws in Ireland and the long struggle for Catholic and Jewish emancipation.

† Russia, France, Italy, Austria-Hungary, and nearly all the smaller States, have adopted universal military service since 1860, and the march of liberty since then has been unprecedented in the world's history.

429,165 in 1805.



230,678 in 1898.



THE EFFECTIVE STRENGTH OF THE
VOLUNTEERS IN 1805 AND IN 1898.
(See p. 25.)



Objections answered 223

safety of the State, that it is practically inconceivable that a reaction against those principles could be brought about by a measure adopted by a nation for its own security.

4. The history of the British people is a sufficient guarantee that the principles which have been the mainspring of her political life will be preserved inviolate, even though the nation may, in a spirit of enlightened self-sacrifice, submit to a curtailment of *individual liberty*, so as to preserve the *freedom of the community—national liberty—itself*.*

5. The very fact that the army I propose would be a true National Militia would be the surest guarantee that it could never be used against the liberties of the people, while it would also prevent any attempt on the part of the 'professional' Army to render itself supreme in the State, an attempt which is, of course, in itself almost inconceivable. Both Armies would be strictly under the control of Parliament, and, from the nature of the case, this would apply particularly to the Home Defence Army; so

* The past and contemporary history of Switzerland, the freest republic in the world, is a living example of the perfect compatibility of *true* civil and religious liberty with obligatory military service.

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that it would not only consist of citizens, but be controlled by the representatives of the people.

I am convinced, therefore, that we can safely make the sacrifice demanded by the most sacred duty of citizenship—a duty recognised by the ancient laws of England, and affirmed by Acts now on the Statute-book — without placing in jeopardy those fundamental rights of civil and religious liberty which we love so well.

VIII. 'Conscript soldiers won't fight with the same spirit as voluntary recruits.'

In view of the lessons of the past, as well as of the present, it is perhaps hardly worth while to discuss this statement seriously ; but, as it still makes its appearance occasionally under such aphoristic forms as 'One volunteer is worth ten pressed men,' it may be well to say a few words on the subject. To begin with, the latter saying is, of course, intentionally misleading, even if it were true as it stands. For a conscript citizen soldier, called to arms on precisely the same conditions as his fellow-countrymen, Peer* and peasant, rich and poor, is *not* a 'pressed man,' but one who obeys the indisputable right of the Sovereign and of the State to

* Another drawback to the Militia Ballot is that peers would be exempt under that system.

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call on *all* able-bodied citizens in defence of the realm. On the other hand, I have shown that under the grossly unfair and iniquitous system of impressment—*i.e.*, of *limited* conscription—many of our wars have been successfully waged in the past, while we owe the most glorious pages in our history, those which tell of our great naval victories against overwhelming odds, to men many of whom were torn from their homes and families by the most unjust and tyrannical laws, but who in the face of the foe forgot their injuries and only remembered that they were Englishmen.

To anyone who has studied the history of the Franco-Prussian War, with its tremendous sacrifice of lives on many a stricken field,* or who has witnessed the struggle of the undisciplined conscript Boer militia against a voluntary Army at least four times as numerous, the assertion that citizen soldiers who have been trained in the best lessons of true patriotism by Universal Military Service will not fight well and bravely is too absurd for serious discussion. I have the greatest admiration for the splendid work done by that *corps d'élite*, the City Im-

* On the German side alone 17,255 were killed in action, and 10,506 died of wounds.

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perial Volunteers, and no doubt 200,000 *such* men would be (training apart) far superior physically and intellectually to a similar force of *average* citizen soldiers of any other country, just because they *are above the average*. But since, human nature being what it is, we are not likely to get 200,000 Volunteers of that type and *with the thorough military training* which modern European warfare demands, it is needless to dwell upon such an obvious fact. On the other hand, if we had over 2,000,000 men who had been through a thorough military training, there would not be the slightest difficulty in getting 200,000 or 300,000 Volunteers for foreign service (supposing we were to adopt Universal Military Service for Home Defence only, without the *obligation* to serve abroad in a great national emergency).*

IX. It may perhaps be urged against my particular proposal that an efficient soldier cannot be produced by one year's training.

To this I reply :

1. One year's training would be more than

* This is proved by the eagerness with which 120,000 Volunteers and nearly 4,000 officers have just responded to the call of the German Emperor on an occasion which could not in any way stir the depths of patriotic feeling as a defensive war in any part of the British Empire would with us.

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double the total training which our Militia gets under present conditions,* and about six or eight times as much as the huge majority of our Volunteers,† to say nothing of the Yeomanry, get.

Yet we are constantly being told that the Militia and the Volunteers are to be regarded as efficient soldiers.‡ Moreover, it is an obvious

* The only qualification necessary for the 30,000 men of the Militia Reserve (which forms part of our Army Reserve, and is, therefore, essentially intended for Foreign Service) is that they shall have done two trainings—*i.e.*, two months' service in the course of two years—and shall be over nineteen years of age.

† To become a Volunteer 'efficient,' it is only necessary to attend at least sixty drills of an hour each in the course of the first two years, and to fire at least sixty rounds of ball cartridge at a target. Once an efficient, only twelve drills need be attended during the third and fourth years, and the number of drills is then reduced to seven; but 'the number of drills is likely to be increased under the new regulations' ('Volunteer Soldiers,' Captain M. H. Hale). Of course, I am fully aware that the large majority of Volunteers do a *very great deal more* than the minimum which is here described; indeed, some, no doubt, do at least as much as a Militiaman in the course of his six years' service of one month annually. I simply state these facts in reply to the objection here urged as to the inadequacy of one year's service.

‡ This is clearly the opinion entertained by the able author of 'The New Battle of Dorking,' who compares them to their advantage with the poor French 'boys' whom he describes as invading England. It is indeed strange that anyone professing a twenty years' knowledge of the French Army should not know that the French conscript is not called to serve till he is

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fact, and one fully borne out by experience, that, apart from the question of the *length* of time actually served, *continuous* service for a certain time is infinitely more valuable than service of the same duration which is split up into short periods and spread over several years.* For in such cases men forget a great deal of what they have learnt, and require some time to shake the stiffness out of their joints and take up the thread of military life.

twenty; and as he does three years' service, it is a gratuitous and most misleading hypothesis to suppose that the French Government would choose young fellows who had only just entered the ranks instead of three-years men for such a tremendous undertaking as the invasion of England. As a matter of fact, it is probable that in such a case the French Government would use the very pick of the three-years men, together with a number of men who had only just left the ranks. I sympathize so heartily with the author's purpose of awakening the British public to a sense of their danger, and with his denunciation of the idea that national safety is to be found in rifle clubs, that I much regret that he should make so misleading a statement on a subject of such vital importance. I may also say that the opinion he expresses on the quality of the French Army, as compared to that which was defeated in 1870, is totally at variance with that held by German, Austrian and Italian—to say nothing of French—officers with whom I have discussed the subject.

* It is the opinion of all who have had an opportunity of judging, that the difference of even the *one week's* extra training which a large number of the Volunteers have gone through this year has added greatly to their efficiency.

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2. At present an enormous amount of time is wasted by the soldier in loafing about with nothing to do, and with every temptation to fill up his far too ample leisure and spend his pay in the public-house. At the same time the most important part of his work, his musketry training, is squeezed into the space of a couple of weeks, and even so it is totally inadequate, whilst spade work is utterly neglected or omitted. No wonder that under such circumstances a doubt should be possible as to whether an efficient soldier can be trained in a year.

But if the citizen soldier of the Home Defence Army were kept fully occupied with his military duties during his year of service, and, above all, had ample and continuous *training in the use of the rifle*, I believe that there would not be the slightest difficulty in turning the *average* Englishman, with the intelligence, physique and morale that belong to the Anglo-Saxon *race*—not to the *proletariat* only—into a very efficient short-service soldier.*

* As a matter of fact, a year happens to be the term of service for the Dutch conscript, while the Swiss has only a few weeks' military training. I cannot, however, agree with Mr. Coulton that a service of that length would prove sufficient for our purposes. On the other hand, a considerable number of men are dismissed after six and nine months' service by

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Military men have repeatedly given expression to the same opinion.* This would be rendered an absolute certainty if the whole manhood of the nation from early boyhood were to engage in rifle-shooting as a national pastime. Let us hope that the present enthusiasm for Rifle Clubs will lead to such a desirable end, and *not* to the disastrous idea that in them we shall find National Safety.

3. It must be remembered that the National Militia I propose is primarily and essentially intended for Home Defence. If, therefore, we could not, *cæteris paribus*, expect to produce quite as perfect a soldier in one year as Germany does in two, we should have such an overwhelming force with which to meet the possible invading army of 150,000 men that our numbers *with* sound training (*not without*) would insure us the victory. But what I wish to insist on

France and Russia respectively, while the experiment of a twenty weeks' training, made with the first class of the Ersatz Reserve in Germany in 1880, gave results that were as surprising as they were satisfactory. (See Bebel, 'Nicht Stehendes Heer sondern Volkswehr,' pp. 73, 74.) Since this was written, the Swedish Government has adopted a year as the term of service in the Swedish Army. As this book is going through the press, a proposal is before the French Chamber to reduce the term of service in the infantry to *one year*.

* See Captain Hime's essay, and the opinions expressed by Colonel Leahy, R.E., in the discussion that followed.

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again and again is that the mere *possession* of such an Army as I propose would suffice to render the idea of invasion so much discussed on the Continent futile—a result which would in itself make for peace.* Universal Military Service is, in fact, essentially a *Peace Policy*—indeed, the *only* Peace Policy—and should receive the support of every member of the Peace Party.

X. 'How would you deal with the Quakers?'

This is, I admit, on the surface a somewhat serious difficulty, as we could not constrain that admirable body of men, the Society of Friends, to accept a proposal which would be in discord with the doctrine of non-resistance which forms such an important part of their belief. I do not think, however, that there is really any serious difficulty here, for—

1. There are only about 17,000 Quakers, men, women, and children, in England and Scotland. About a quarter of these, 4,000, would be theoretically capable of bearing arms. So that the whole question resolves itself into an exemption extended on religious grounds to

* As the author of 'The New Battle of Dorking' well says :
'The decision [peace or war] depends on *what the French think*,
not on what we know.'

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that small number of men. Indeed, as every Quaker is entitled to preach, the exemption might possibly be made on the same lines as with candidates for Holy Orders.

2. I do not believe that military *training* would *necessarily* be regarded as contrary to the Quaker tenets by all members of that Society. The following interesting passage occurs in a letter from a Quaker gentleman which appeared in the *Spectator* of June 16, 1900: 'Our doctrine of non-resistance is unintentionally misrepresented. It is actually held by us in every variety of strength and dilution, but practically nobody objects to force as such, nor to the police. . . . On actual war, there are Friends, like John Bright, who did not theoretically object to all war, but only to every war that had happened in his time. . . . But our testimony against war is not, after all, quite in the central trunk of our teaching, though an important branch of it.'*

Well, I have already shown that there is no better way of securing permanent peace and

* Commenting upon this letter in a communication to the *Spectator* in September, another Quaker points out that neither George Fox nor Isaac Pennington were against the use of force and 'the sword of justice' in a righteous cause, as in the case of '*peoples defending themselves against foreign invasion.*'

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getting rid of an arrogant spirit of aggression than to give to the whole nation the spirit of responsibility which universal military training confers.

3. With regard to the possibility that skulkers might take advantage of the Quaker objection to military service, I doubt very much whether such a cowardly trick would be very successful, as I think the shrewd judgment of the Members of the Society would soon find out the worthlessness of the new-comers and disown them as Friends. Furthermore, the Quakers have never been active in making proselytes, and at the present time it is certainly not easy for those who desire to become Quakers to obtain admission as Members of the Society of Friends.

XI. It will be urged with some show of reason that Universal Military Service does not invariably produce the good results to the moral welfare of the people that I have described elsewhere. Those who take up this line will point triumphantly to the terrible tale of treason, perjury and cruelty which the Dreyfus case unfolded to the world, and to the revelations of M. Urbain Gohier in his book on the French army.

I know full well that we shall hear this argument urged again and again, not only by

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those who honestly believe it, but by the thousands who will use it as an excellent excuse for fighting against any real sacrifice for this great country.

I therefore wish to state my firm conviction—a conviction formed by residence in France among Frenchmen, and by a pretty thorough acquaintance with French literature—that this argument is utterly misleading, and simply consists in putting the cart before the horse. I received so much kindness in France, was treated with such cordial hospitality, and have so many good friends in that country, that I make the following statement with great reluctance, knowing, however, that it is the expression of the opinion of many thoughtful Frenchmen. I say, then, emphatically that the corruption existing in the French Army (and it has been grossly exaggerated) is the *mirror*, not the *cause*, of the general immorality prevalent throughout all classes in France.*

I shall not attempt here to discuss the causes

* Referring to the state of the French Army during the reign of Louis XV., Judge O'Connor Morris uses words which are singularly applicable to the present: 'All the ills in the social life of France reappeared, in a word, in the armed forces of the State' ('Frederick the Great': *The United Service Magazine*, September, 1900).

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of that immorality, but there are two which are so obvious as to *sauter aux yeux*. I refer to the enormous quantity and the wide dissemination of indecent literature, and to the total absence of religious teaching in the Government schools and lycées, in which the name of God must not even be mentioned. I believe that every Englishman who has been long resident in France, and has an intimate acquaintance with its language and people, and who is at the same time without a distinct *parti pris* against conscription, will support me in the view that it is in those two prominent facts, but above all in the latter, that lies the cause of that corruption and immorality which prevails among a people possessing so many splendid qualities—courage, generosity, charm of manner, grace of expression, and that wonderful lucidity of mind which has ever enabled them to be the interpreters to an admiring Europe of great ideas wherever they have arisen. Indeed, I am personally convinced that the habits of discipline, manliness, and obedience learnt by the French conscript during his all-too-long term of service have a wholesome ‘antiseptic’ influence on him personally, and, through him, on the nation at large. We need only turn to other countries—Germany, Austria,

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Switzerland—to see at once that it is not the *system* of universal military training that is at fault, but the moral atmosphere of the nation, and above all the influence of the officers on their men.

In this connection I cannot do better than quote the words of the distinguished English officer who acted as military correspondent to the *Times* at the autumn manœuvres in Germany last year. He says (Article I., September 22, 1899):

‘It can hardly be questioned that where military service is obligatory and universal the bearing, the discipline, and the behaviour in peace as in war of the armed forces must react with a most powerful effect on the whole people. . . . Every autumn some 250,000 young soldiers are discharged to their homes, and the ideas which they have imbibed during their two years’ service not only leave a lasting impression on the individual, but permeate every town and village throughout the Empire. It follows, then, that it is of the utmost importance to the national life that the military atmosphere should be pure and wholesome, and that the ideas which the reservist carries away with him should be morally invigorating. . . . If this

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ideal is not constantly kept in view by those in authority, by those who are professional soldiers . . . the guardians of the army's honour, of its traditions and reputation, the whole world has been made aware of what deplorable consequences may ensue. With the return of the reservists, poison and not health may be injected into the veins of the nation . . . a spurious patriotism grind fair play and justice in the dust, and "faith unfaithful" itself betray the nation it pretends to save.'

After pointing out that the defects of the French Army in 1870 were greatly due to the fact that the conception of duty among officers was very low, and that, the military atmosphere being impure, the army had become rotten to the core, the writer continues :

'There is no need for apprehension that the Army of United Germany will meet with the same fate. The nation will never be betrayed by those responsible for the moral training of the soldier.

'The great manœuvres which have just come to a close are not only evidence of military capacity and of professional zeal, but show how high is the conception of duty in every grade, and how close and invigorating is the supervision

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exercised by the supreme authorities. . . . The character of the army is indicated by two words, —“thoroughness” and “duty.” Nothing is overlooked. Attention to detail and the precise performance of even the most trifling functions are everywhere conspicuous, and it is evidently most rigorously impressed upon all ranks and all branches that “whatever has to be done must be done thoroughly.” . . . Almost every regulation that is issued has in view the fostering of loyalty and manliness, the encouragement of morality, the inculcation of devotion to duty, and the increase of confidence between officers and men.’

In his final article (No. V., November 20, 1899) the writer says :

‘The men, young soldiers as they are, needed little telling what they were to do, and no watching how they did it. . . . Discipline was paramount throughout, and not merely the discipline of mechanical obedience, but discipline of a higher sort, not based on fear or habit, but on loyalty, honour and self-sacrifice.’

I have quoted these words from a high English military authority somewhat fully for two reasons. First, because it is the best answer to the argument that the adoption of Universal Military Service has a bad effect on the *morale* of a nation. Secondly,

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because, if we are to judge what its effects would be in England, we must look at its results, not among the French, who have hardly any trait of character in common with us, except personal courage, but among a Teutonic nation closely allied to us by common ties of descent, language, literature and history, and possessing the same *Grundideen* which are at the root of national character among all the Germanic races. For the rest, I believe there is an intimate connection in nature, no less than in etymology, between *virility* and *virtue*, and that the nation which gives to its *whole manhood* a thorough physical training will by that very means produce a higher moral tone among the people than one which allows a large percentage of its men and women to decay in the slums of its big cities.

XII. There is a large class of people who, while recognising that 'Conscription is inevitable *some day*,' argue as follows :

'It may have to come, but let us, at any rate, not have recourse to it till a great national disaster has befallen us. Austria did not adopt it till after the crushing defeat of Sadowa, nor France till after 1870, and yet they have got along very well. Why shouldn't we do the same?'

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Unfortunately, those who adopt this line of argument may point to the Prime Minister's speech in the House of Lords, February 20, as giving some support to their views. In that speech the following words occur :

'It is quite true that the nations of the whole world have adopted in some form or other compulsory service, but it is also true that all the nations of the world have suffered the horrors of invasion.* I doubt very much whether you can count on hearty support for a measure which would press so much on the liberty of your people unless some events occurred in Europe which would frighten the people at the danger of invasion.'

These words seem to breathe that fatal and fatalistic spirit of *Mañana* which has ruined Spain, and are no doubt delightful to those whose

* I may remark that this is not really true (as far as a question of cause and effect is concerned) in the case of many of the smaller States which have *recently* adopted universal military service. They have evidently done so partly because they recognised that the possession of even a comparatively small highly-trained army, though quite useless for defence against their powerful neighbours, would make them valuable allies to one side or the other in case of war between the Great Powers; partly, undoubtedly, because they recognised in military training a splendid school of patriotism, and a powerful aid to the physical and moral welfare of their people.

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philosophy is summed up in the motto '*Après nous le déluge.*' But mark the words that follow :

' *We may wish that it was otherwise ; that that population were so far-sighted that they would take precautions before a state of danger arose, and would undergo great sacrifices and consent to severe restrictions* in order that these dangers might never come upon them. We may wish that that should be so, but you know that that is not the nature of a population that pays little attention to political matters, and that is engaged in the pursuits and interests of daily life.*'

One could wish that there were less of predestinarianism in all this, and more of the spirit of *leadership* which a people has a right to expect in a man of Lord Salisbury's position, weight and experience ; but it is not difficult to see what his true meaning is. At any rate, there is no ambiguity about a passage in his speech to the Primrose League.

'What I am urging is *the necessity of precaution in time,*' he said on that occasion. 'And allow me to remind you that, as a great maritime

* I have shown that the sacrifice I propose is *not* so very great, nor the restrictions very severe, for men who have any true love for, or pride in, this great land of England.

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nation, you stand in a special position. The great military Powers of the Continent . . . have passed through unsuccessful wars which again and again have landed the enemy in their capitals, and yet they are as strong, are even stronger, now that the experience has passed by.* Can we say with confidence that that would be the effect *if London were the scene of a similar operation?* Remember what has happened to the great maritime Powers of the past. . . . In every case the great maritime Power has been paralyzed and killed, not by the disasters it may have suffered in its provinces or its outlying dependencies; in every case it has succumbed to a blow directed at the heart. That is a lesson which a Power like Great Britain ought not to neglect. So long as our heart was unstruck, we might look with comparative indifference on the result of any war. . . . *But if our heart is once struck, there is an end of the history of England.'*

Plain words these, and weighty ones, giving us, as befits a Prime Minister, wise prophecy instead of predestinarian platitude. Let no man hereafter pretend that we have not been duly warned, or that we can take courage *to do nothing* on the strength of the good fortune

* Because they have profited by the lessons of the past.

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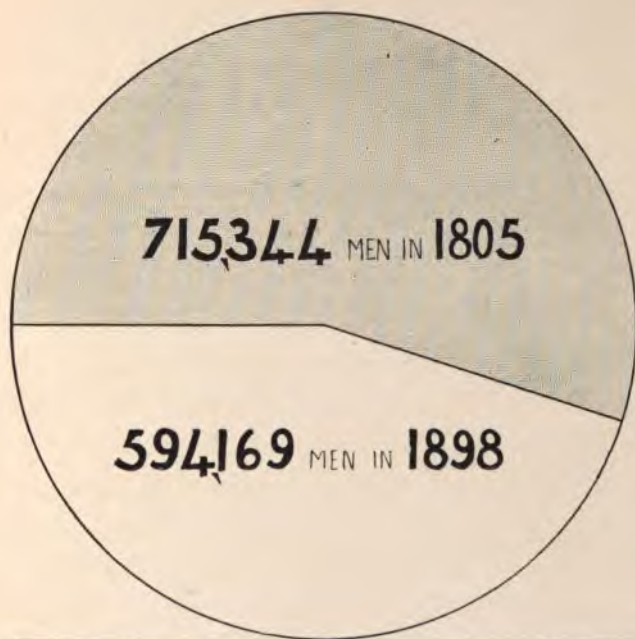
of other Powers. For there is no doubt that the successful invasion of England would mean the loss of all our Colonies, which would be distributed among the Powers eager to share in the spoils of a nation which has never been regarded with such universal dislike as at present. Even *then*, I do not deny it, a nation of forty millions, possessing the grit and bull-dog courage of the Anglo-Saxon race, and taught at last by bitter humiliation and disaster to adopt manhood service—even *then*, that nation could attain a certain measure of prosperity ; but ‘the history of England,’ the history which recalls the glorious deeds of the past, which makes every British heart beat high at the proud names of Cressy, Poitiers and Waterloo, La Hogue, Trafalgar and the Nile, the history that is synonymous with strength, greatness and Empire—*that* history would be at an end.

XIII. ‘The people won’t stand it.’

This is a statement made over and over again with an air of finality that is supposed to settle the whole thing. I say advisedly a statement, for it is not an argument. It is, moreover, a statement which is an insult masquerading as a compliment, with some fine reference to the ‘incompatibility’ of obligatory personal service

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with our free English spirit and Constitution. For Heaven's sake let us put cant aside, and look at what such a statement really means. It means this, that Englishmen are not willing to make any personal sacrifice for their country, that they are not willing to do as much for our glorious land as is willingly done by Dutchmen, Belgians, Bulgarians, Servians, and Montenegrans. Is that something to be proud of, something to make us hold our heads high among the nations of the earth? I think not. *But is it true?* Who has ever spoken to the men of Britain and asked them to make this sacrifice, pointing out not only its necessity, but also its immense advantages to the future welfare of the nation and the race? Who has ever tried to *lead* the people of recent years, instead of flattering their ignorance and pampering them in their *supposed* selfishness? Ah! if a Chatham were alive to-day, a statesman great enough to stand above party, and to risk the loss of power and popularity, I think the heart of the English people would answer his appeal with no uncertain voice. Such a one would be in the truest sense of the word the saviour of his country, and would earn the undying gratitude of future generations of Englishmen.



TOTAL EFFECTIVE MILITARY FORCES (EXCLUDING INDIA)
IN 1805 AND IN 1898. (*See p. 25.*)



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There is one man, at least, who could make such an appeal to-day with all the weight of a great name, a great position, and full knowledge of the European situation. Will he do so, or will power and popularity be dearer to him than patriotism?

At least, let us hear no more talk of the refusal of the English people to entertain a proposal that has never yet been fairly put before them.

CONCLUSION.

I HAVE in these pages placed before the public, for the first time, so far as I am aware, a full statement of the case for Universal Military Service. I have shown that, while we *seem* stronger than ever, we are emphatically *far* weaker for defence than we were a century ago, both in relation to the enormous responsibilities that rest on our shoulders, and to the increase in the 'materials for military aggression' in the hands of foreign Powers.* At the same time, while at the beginning of the century we possessed the cordial friendship of some Powers and the benevolent neutrality of others, there never has been a period in our history when we have

* To say nothing of their materials in *men*. In 1898 the *natural* increase of population by excess of births over deaths was in Italy, 338,809; England and Wales, 371,124; Austria-Hungary, 469,847; Germany, 846,871; Russia in Europe, 1,329,636 (1894). Thus, the population of Russia in Europe is increasing *four* times faster than that of England and Wales, and that of Germany more than twice as fast.

been the object of such universal dislike as at the present moment. In spite of every expedient of increased pay, lowered physical standard, larger bounties, and the generous provision for the comfort, health and recreation of the soldier, the difficulty in providing the men voted by Parliament grows ever greater. Nor can it be denied that the question of an adequate Naval Reserve assumes a more serious aspect with every new addition to our fleets. And yet there seems to be some inner *Trieb*, undoubtedly due to economic laws, urging us ever onward to new expansion and fresh absorption of territory.

No man who seriously considers these phenomena can doubt that the moment has arrived when we must make some sacrifice in order to guard that which we have perhaps acquired too easily. In other words, the *necessity* for Universal Military Service, primarily for Home Defence, is clear.

But, fortunately, this is a case in which sacrifice brings its own reward. There is no question here of amputating a limb in order to save the patient. Rather is it the application of a *tonic* to the body politic—a tonic called for by many symptoms that resemble anæmia and debility. And we have, as Britons, the proud

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privilege of showing the world that we can *offer* this sacrifice to our country of our own free will. While other peoples (except Switzerland and France) have merely acquiesced in the measures taken by their Governments for the nation's good, it lies with the people of England to decide whether they will rise to the great idea of a self-denying ordinance that shall at once make them truly strong, and give the national security and that lasting peace which Walpole declared to be England's greatest need. Thus, too, we shall acquire that racial immortality which every great people must desire, while if we refuse to accept the clear teaching of the present and the past, we must in our turn inevitably decline and fall as did the great and wealthy Empires that are gone for ever.

In James Russell Lowell's noble words—

'Once to every man and nation
Comes the moment to decide
In the strife of Truth with Falsehood
For the good or evil side.

* * * * *

'Then it is the brave man chooses,
While the coward stands aside,
Till the multitude makes virtue
Of the faith they once denied.'

Therefore it is that I conclude this book with an appeal to all Britons, of whatever rank, party, station or sex.

I appeal to the Conservatives to support a measure founded on the most sacred duty of citizenship, thoroughly in consonance with the principles of ancient English law, and giving the only possible guarantee for present safety and future greatness.

I appeal to the Liberals because such a measure is truly just, and would advance those purposes of social amelioration which they have particularly at heart, by bringing men of all classes into closer contact, and by improving the physical, mental, and moral condition of the people.

I appeal to the Radicals because the measure I propose is truly *radical*, distributing the burthens of national defence among all ranks and classes, instead of allowing it to weigh crushingly on the proletariat alone.

I appeal to Mr. John Burns and the Labour Party to give to the British labourer a year's free training at the cost of the State, which would mean to him a removal from slum life and an immense improvement in his physique and health,

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and a valuable lesson in method, and hence an addition to his wage-earning capacity.*

I appeal to the working men of Great Britain to apply their own strong common-sense to this question, and not to be misled by catch-phrases about 'the liberty of the subject' and the ridiculous cant about a 'Blood Tax'! Let them remember that, under the system I propose, *every* man, be he 'Duke's son' or 'cook's son,' would give one year's service to his country. In this one year the young British working man would get not only a healthy active life in the open air, with good food and airy rooms to live and sleep in, but he would receive a training in scientific and methodic work which would add greatly to his wage-earning capacity on his return to civilian life.

I appeal to the manufacturers and merchants of England, without referring here to the question of patriotism, to support Universal Military Service as a measure of *insurance*, and because (though I fully admit that it would involve some

* See, on the attitude of the Radicals and the Labour Party in Switzerland towards compulsory military service, Mr. G. G. Coulton's pamphlet, 'A Strong Army in a Free State,' pp. 29 and 32. See also August Bebel, the Socialist leader, in his pamphlet, 'Nicht Stehendes Heer sondern Volkswehr.'

